

THE
ATHENAID,
A POEM.

VOL. III.



23ye 19

THE

A T H E N A I D,
A P O E M,

BY THE

A U T H O R O F L E O N I D A S.

VOL. III.

L O N D O N:

P R I N T E D F O R T. C A D E L L ,
I N T H E S T R A N D .

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THE
A T H E N A I D.

BOOK the TWENTY-FIRST.

SEV'N days were past, when Lamachus appear'd

Before Mardonius. Mighty chief, he said,

I hasted to Themistocles, and spoke

Thy friendly words. His answer first imply'd

No more, than cold acceptance of the terms

5

For Mindarus. At length two hundred, prime,

Of all his num'rous captives, he releas'd;

His minister, Sicus, in the ship,

Which landed me, detains them near the port,

VOL. III.

B

Till

2 THE ATHENAID. Book XXI.

Till Haliartus, and the promis'd gold 10
Are lodg'd on board. Themistocles himself
Was bound to Athens with his menial train,
His wife and race. We parted on the shore.
To me, repeating in a whisper'd tone
Thy proffers large, he scornful thus reply'd : 15
“ The spoils of Asia will exceed her gifts.”
Then loud thy brave defiance I pronounc'd.
He with redoubled arrogance thus brief :
“ Rouse thy new master ; else the plains of Thebes
“ I may attain before him.” Fir'd with rage 20
Mardonious here : If Athens do not fend
By Alexander's mouth submission low,
She shall become the spoil of Asian flames,
Themistocles spectator of the blaze.
Be swift ; yon Greek for Mindarus exchange ; 25
Two hundred talents promis'd shall be paid ;
These ransom'd warriors I appoint my guard ;
Brave Mindarus their captain. Stern he ends ;

In

Book XXI. THE ATHENAI'D. 3

In open fight th' Athenian to confront
Magnanimous he burns; his heated soul 30
Yields to delusion of that subtle chief,
Wise like the serpent gliding through a brake,
When his empoison'd jaws in silence steal
On some incautious woodman, who, on toiled 35
Intent, exerts his brawny strength, nor deems
A foe is nigh, nor hears him, nor perceives,
Till sore the death-inflicting wound he feels.

A summons swift for embarkation flies
To Haliartus. With regret he leaves
Dear friends, but dearer his Acanthè's love, 40
More prevalent his constant zeal for Greece
Combine to sooth his pain. They wing his speed
To good Sicinus, who, the ransom'd train
Discharging, tow'rds Eubœa steers the keel
With Persian treasure fraught. The ev'ning clos'd,
When by a hasty mandate to the son 46

4 THE ATHENAID. Book XXI.

Of Gobryas, Lamachus was call'd. The chief
In perturbation of indignant wrath
Was striding o'er the carpet, which bespread
His rich pavilion's floor. His words were these :

The Macedonian king is just arriv'd 51
From Athens ; I have seen him. Dost thou know,
That supercilious populace hath spurn'd
My condescension, menac'd ev'n a prince,
Their host, for proff'ring kindness in my name. 55
Such my reward. To all th' Ionian Greeks,
The seed of Athens, I, when victor, left
Their democratic rule and laws unchang'd ;
But I will cut all freedom by the roots
From man's ungrateful race. The wily Greek 60
Insinuating fram'd this brief reply :

Perhaps the name of Xerxes may offend
Th' Athenian tribes. Might Europe once behold

The

Book XXI. THE ATHENAID. 5

The son of Gobryas thron'd, then. . . Ha! proceed,
Mardonius answer'd. Lamachus again: 65

Doth not all Ægypt, doth not Libya's clime,
With Asia vast, afford redundant sway
To gratify one monarch? First of men,
Why may not Thrace, with Macedonia's realm,
Thessalia, Greece, whate'er thy mighty arm 70
Shall rend by conquest from the western world,
Become thy prize? They willing might accept
A sov'reign like Mardonius. Try their choice.

Away—Mardonius spake; and frowning bade
The Greek retire. Now left alone he mus'd, 75
Thus questioning his heart: Aspiring thoughts,
Do ye awaken at the coz'ning touch
Of this vile tempter? Honour, while my ear
Detests th' adviser, fortify my breast
Against th' advice—Enough—More swiftly drive,

6 THE ATHENAID. Book XXI.

Dull night, thy sooty wheels; come, active morn,
Then to the field, Mardonius. Conquer now;
Deliberate hereafter on the spoil.
But thou may'st perish—perish, and the gifts
Of fortune change to everlasting fame. 85

A sudden trumpet strikes his ear; he sees
Mafistius nigh. So breaks the polar star
Through night's unrav'ling canopy of clouds
On some bewilder'd sailor to correct
His erring course. Amidst a warm embrace 90
Began Mardonius: O, in season come,
Thou more, than half myself! my strength decays,
My talents languish, ev'n my honour sleeps,
When thou art far. Mafistius calm replies:

I have compos'd Pallene's late revolt 95
Through all the district; Potidæa's walls
Alone refisted; from whose small domain
O'erflow'd

O'erflow'd by tides the army I withdrew.

I come, Mardonius, not to hear a tale
Of languid talents, or of strength decay'd,

100

Much less of honour sleeping in thy breast,

When I am absent. Honour on a rock

Immoveable is fix'd; its solid base

The billowy passions beat in vain, nor gusts

Of fortune shake; support from none it wants,

Firm in itself. Some augury, or dream

106

Inexplicably dark, o'erclouds thy mind;

Resume thy native manliness, O chief,

Whose loyal faith the mightiest king entrusts

With all his pow'r and splendour, save the crown.

Prepare to pass Thermopylæ, and bring

111

Our labours to decision. Gobryas' son

Compares the language of his spotless friend

With his own devious thoughts, and turns aside

In blushing silence; but, recover'd, sends

115

His mandate forth to march by rising dawn.

8 THE AHENAI D. Book XXI.

Not with a less commotion in his soul
From diff'rent cares Emathia's prince resorts
To Amarantha. On her beauteous neck
In conjugal affection, yet in grief 120
Unutterable long he hangs. Alas !
My lord, she said, though early I presag'd
Thy embassy abortive, hath it prov'd
Disastrous? Yes, her agonizing spouse
Return'd; what more disastrous, than reproach
Among the old, hereditary friends 126
Of my forefathers! Amarantha, lend
Attention; amply shall my tongue relate
Events impref'sd too deeply on my heart.
I went to Athens; Aristides call'd 130
Her various tribes; the image of a god
Was he presiding. Innocent, at least
Intentionally guiltless, I began;
Good will to Athens prompted ev'ry word:

Impow'r'd

Book XXI. THE ATHENAI.D.

9

Impow'r'd by Xerxes, thus Mardonius greets
You, men of Athens. Repossess your soil, 136
Enlarg'd dominion from the royal hand
Ask and obtain; be govern'd by your laws;
The son of Gobryas will rebuild your fanes;
Accept the king's alliance, and be free 140
With added strength and splendour. Me receive,
Illustrious people, offspring of the soil
Which you inhabit. Not a guest unknown
In Athens, I, your Macedonian host,
Of warm, unchang'd affection to your state, 145
Salvation bring; prosperity, and peace.
Reflect, what numbers of subjected Greeks,
Some ancient foes to Athens, others friends,
But now constrain'd, with Xerxes are ally'd.
The small remainder unsubdu'd consult 150
Their own defence. Are Spartans in the field?
Your produce, indefatigable race,
Your new-built mansions to a second waste:

B 5.

Of

Of flames, your wives, your progeny, they leave
 To want and rapine. Singly can you face 155
 Half Greece, all Asia, leagu'd against your weal?

Oh! Amarantha, frowns on ev'ry brow
 Indignant lowr'd around me. Present there
 Was Aëmnestus from Laconia's state;
 He, who, unaw'd by Xerxes on his throne, 160
 Strange retribution claim'd, and sternly chose
 Mardonius' self the victim to appease.]
 Leonidas. Th' Athenians he address'd:

“ Invading Sardis to enlarge your sway,
 “ Athenians, you are authors of a war, 165
 “ Which now extends to all of Grecian blood;
 “ Ill would it then become you to desert
 “ The gen'ral cause. To servitude resign'd
 “ By you, a double shame the Greeks would cast
 On Athens, known of old and often prov'd 170
 “ By

Book XXI. THE ATHENAI'D.

LI

“ By arms and counsel to redeem and guard
“ The liberty of nations. I condemn
“ Like you my tardy countrymen; will bleed
“ Not less for you, than Sparta. Soon, I trust,
“ She will arrange her phalanx on the field; 175
“ Else to your vengeance I devote my head.
“ Meantime your wives and offspring ev'ry state
“ In love will cherish. Attic ears, be shut
“ To this deceiver; his condition calls
“ On him to plead for tyranny; himself 180
“ Wields a despotic scepter, petty lord
“ Of feeble Macedon, and Persia's slave.”

Severe and awful Aristides rose;
His manners still urbanity adorn'd:

“ Ambassador of Sparta,” he began, 185
“ Us thou hast charg'd as authors of the war,
“ Yet dost extol our vigour in redress.

B 6

“ Of

12 THE ATHENAID. Book XXI.

“ Of injur’d states. Th’ Ionians were enslav’d,
“ Our own descendants ; Sardis we assail’d
“ To set them free ; nor les our present zeal 190
“ For all of Grecian blood, by common ties
“ Of language, manners, customs, rites and laws
“ To us ally’d. Can Sparta doubt our faith?
“ What disingenuous, unbeseeming thought
“ In her, late witness of our lib’ral proof 195
“ Of constancy! when ev’ry clime on earth
“ Was equal to Athenians, where to chuse
“ Their habitation, true to Greece they stay’d
“ In sight of Athens burning to attempt
“ The dang’rous fight, which Spartans would have
“ Shunn’d.
“ Now from the ruins of paternal tombs, 201
“ Of altars fall’n, and violated fanes,
“ Loud vengeance calls, a voice our courage hears,
“ Enlarg’d to pious fury. Spartan, know,
“ If yet unknowing, of the Attic race 205
“ Not

“ Not one to treat with Xerxes will survive ;
“ Our wives and offspring shall encumber none ;
“ All we require of Sparta is to march ;
“ That, ere th’ expected foe invades our bounds,
“ The Greeks united on Bœotian plains 210
“ May give him battle—Alexander, view
“ That glorious pow’r, which rolls above our heads ;
“ He first his wonted orbit shall forsake,
“ Ere we our virtue. Never more appear
“ Before the presence of Cecropian tribes 215
“ With embassies like this ; nor, blind by zeal,
“ Howe’er sincere to Athens, urge again
“ What is beneath her majesty to bear.
“ I should be griev’d her anger should disgrace
“ A prince, distinguish’d as her host and friend ;
“ Meantime I pity thy dependent state.” 221

Loud acclamations hurried from the sight
Of that assembly thy dejected spouse,
In his own thoughts dishonour’d. What a lot

14 THE ATHENAI D. Book XXI.

Is mine ! If Xerxes triumph, I become
 A slave in purple ; should the Greeks prevail,
 Should that Eubœan conqueror, the son
 Of Neocles be sent th' Athenian scourge

225

Hear, and take comfort, interpos'd the queen.
 To thee I come for counsel, sigh'd her lord ; 230
 I will repose me on thy breast, will hear
 Thy voice, hereafter ever will obey ;
 Thy love, thy charms can sooth my present cares,
 Thy wisdom ward the future. She proceeds :

That Greece will triumph, rest assur'd ; no force
 Of these untaught Barbarians can resist 236
 Her policy and arms. Awhile, dear lord,
 We must submit to wear the galling mask
 Necessity imposes. New events
 Are daily scatter'd by the restless palm 240
 Of Fortune ; some will prove propitious. Wise,

To

To all men gracious, Aristides serv'd

By us in season will befriend our state.

This said, her star-like beauty gilds his gloom,
While round them heav'n his midnight curtain drops.

By rising dawn th' Oetæan rocks and caves 246

Ring with ten thousand trumps and clarions loud.

With all his host the son of Gobryas leaves

His empty'd camp. So rushes from his den

The strong and thick-furr'd animal, who boasts

Calisto's lineage; bound in drowsy sloth 251

Bleak winter he exhausts; when tepid spring

His limbs releases from benumbing cold,

He reinstates his vigour, and asserts

Among Sarmatian woods his wonted sway. 255

The bands entire of Persians and of Medes,

The rest, selected from unnumber'd climes,

Compose the army. Forty myriads sweep

Thy pass, renown'd Thermopylæ, to rush

On Grecian cities scatter'd in their view. 260

So by the deep Borysthenes in floods

Of

16 THE ATHENAID. Book XXI.

Of frothy rage, by mightier Danube's wave,
 Nor less by countless congregated streams,
 The Euxine fwoln, through Hellespontine straits
 Impels his rapid current; thence extends

265

Among th' Ægean isles a turbid maze.

Three days the multitude requir'd to pass

The rough defile. Masisius in the van

His sumptuous arms, and all-surpassing form

Discovers. Tiridates leads the rear

270

Clos'd by the troops of Macedon, whose king

Sat on a car beside his radiant queen.

Amid the center, on a milk-white steed,

Mardonius rode in armour, plated gold

Thick set with gems. Before him march'd a guard

Of giant size, from each Barbarian tribe,

276

For huge dimension, and terrific mien;

Preferr'd. Their captain, from his stature nam'd

Briareus, born on Rhodope, display'd

That hundred-handed Titan on his shield.

280

He fwung around an iron-studded mace,

In

Book XXI. THE ATHENAID. 17

In length ten cubits; to his shoulders broad
The hairy spoils of hunted bears supply'd
A shaggy mantle; his uncover'd head
Was bald, except where nigh the brawny neck
Short bushy locks their crisped terrors knit. 286

So his own mountain through surrounding woods
Lifts to the clouds a summit bare and smooth
In frost, which glistens by no season thaw'd.

Not such is gentle Mindarus behind 290
In argent mail. Unceasing, on his shield
Intent, Cleora newly painted there
A living beauty, but another's prize,
He views, while hopeless passion wastes the hue
Of his fair cheek, and elegance of form. 295

Not less th' unrivall'd Amarantha's eyes
Had pierc'd the son of Gobryas. Instant sparks
On her appearance from Nicæa first
Had kindled warm desire, which absence cool'd,
While she in distant Macedon abode. 300

When

18 THE ATHENAID. Book XXI.

When winter melted at the breath of spring,
 Her flight again amid th' assembling host
 Reviv'd the fervour of an eastern breast
 By nature prone, by wanton licence us'd,
 To am'rous pleasures. Public duty still 305
 Employ'd his hours; still smother'd was the flame,
 Nor on his wishes had occasion smil'd.
 Ev'n in the absence of Æmathia's prince
 At Athens, friendship's unremitting care
 Still in Sandaucè's chamber held the queen 310
 Sequester'd, inaccessible immur'd.

Beside Mafistius rode a youthful page
 Of eastern lineage. He in tend'rest years
 Stol'n by perfidious traffickers in slaves,
 By Medon purchas'd, to Melissa giv'n, 315
 By her was nam'd Statirus, and retain'd
 Among her holy servitors. This youth
 On her benign protector she bestow'd.

Mafistius

Book XXI. THE ATHENAID. 19

Masistius priz'd her token of esteem
Beyond himself, and daily bounty show'r'd 320
On young Statirus. Near the Locrian vale
Advancing now the satrap thus began:

O ! early train'd by sage Melissa's hand,
Gift of her friendship, and in merit dear,
Nine months are fled, Statirus, since I bow'd 325
In docile reverence, not unlike thy own,
To her instruction. All her words divine
In precept or narration, from this breast
No time can blot. I now perceive a lake,
Which holds an island she hath oft describ'd, 330
Where tombs are mould'ring under cypress shades;
There she hath told me, great Oileus refts.
O father of Melissa, should my pow'r
To savage licence of invasion leave
Thy dust expos'd, my progress were but small 335
In virtue's track; Masistius would disgrace

Thy

20 THE ATHENAID. Book XXI.

Thy daughter's guidance—Fly, Statirus, post
 These my attendant vassals to protect
 That sacred turf; let each battalion pass
 Ere ye rejoin me. Uttering this, he hears 340
 The trumpet's evening signal to encamp.
 The sun is low; not ent'ring yet the vale,
 Mardonius halts, and summons to his tent
 Thessalia's chieftain, faithless Greek, approv'd
 The Persian's friend, with him th' unwilling prince
 Of Macedon, to whom the gen'ral thus: 346

To march by dawn your squadrons both prepare:
 Thou, Larissæan Thorax, in these tracts
 My trusted guide, with swift excursion reach
 The Isthmus; watch the Spartan motions there.
 Thou, Alexander, sweep the furthest bounds 351
 Of Locris, Doris, Phocis; all their youth
 In arms collect; ere thirty days elapse,
 I shall expect them on the plains of Thebes.

He

Book XXI. THE ATHENAID. 21

He said: The king and Thorax both retire. 355

The morning shines; they execute their charge;

The host proceeds. Once happy was the vale,

Where Medon's father, and his faithful swain,

Now to illustrious Haliartus chang'd,

Abode in peace. No longer is retain'd 360

The verdant smoothness, ridg'd by grating wheels

Of Libyan cars, uptorn by pond'rous hoofs

Of trooping steeds and camels. Not this day

Is festive, such as Sparta's king enjoy'd,

When lib'r al hospitality receiv'd 365

His guardian standard on the Oilean turf.

No jocund swain now modulates his pipe

To notes of welcome; not a maiden decks

Her hair in flow'rs; mute Philomel, whose throat

Once tun'd her warble to Laconian flutes, 370

Amid barbarian dissonance repines.

Now in rude march th' innumerable host
Approach the fountain, whose translucent rills

In

22 THE ATHENAIID. Book XXI.

In murmur lull the passenger's repose
 On beds of moss, in that refreshing cell, 375
 To rural peace constructed by the friend
 Cf man, Oileus. Thither to evade
 The noontide heat the son of Gobryas turns.
 Briareus, captain of his giant guard,
 Accosts him ent'ring : Image of the king, 380
 A lift'ning ear to me thy servant lend ;
 Thou goest to Thebes ; far diff'rent is the track
 To Delphi. Shall that receptacle proud
 Of Grecian treasure, heap'd from earliest times,
 Yet rest unspoil'd ? An earthquake, not the arms
 Of feeble Delphians, foil'd the first attempt ; 386
 Not twice Parnassus will disjoint his frame.
 Let me the precious enterprize resume,
 Who neither dread the mountain, nor the god.

Though not assenting, yet without reproof 390
 Mardonius looks, postponing his reply.

Hence soon the rumour of a new attempt
Against the Pythian oracle, the seat
Of Amarantha's birth, alarms her soul.

Massistius born to virtue, and refin'd 395

By frequent converse with Melissa pure,
The queen consults. Her instant he conveys

Before his friend, to deprecate an act
Of sacrilege so fatal once. The cell

She enters. Like Anchises, when his flock 400

On Ida's mount was folded, at the sight

Of Venus, breaking on his midnight hut

In all the radiance of celestial charms,

Mardonius stands, and fixes on the queen

An eye transported. At a sign his friend 405

Withdrew, but waited nigh. To her the chief:

What fortune brings the fairest of her sex
To her adoring servant? She replies :

False

24 THE ATHENAID. Book XXI.

False sure the rumour which pervades thy camp.
A second time to violate the shrine 410
Of Phœbus once provok'd, and sorely felt,
Thou canst not mean. The eager Persian then:

Admit th' intent; thy interceding voice
Protects Apollo. Not on my request
Avoid an impious action, firm she spake; 415
Weigh thy own danger in offending heav'n,
By piety and mercy win its grace.

No, all the merit shall be thine, he cried;
The favour due from heav'n be all thy own.
I ask no more than Amarantha's smile 420
For my reward; as Phœbus is thy god,
Thou art my goddess. Let me worship thus—

He stopp'd, and seiz'd her hand with am'rous lips
To stain those lilyed beauties, which surpass'd

Junonian

Book XXI. THE ATHENAI'D. 25

Junonian whiteness. Virtue from her eyes 425

Flash'd, and with crimson indignation dy'd

Her cheeks: Retire; forget not who I am,

Stern she rebuk'd him. He, accustom'd long

To yielding beauty in the wanton East,

That torrid clime of love, a stranger he 430

To elegance of coyness in the sex,

Much more to chaste repulse, when ev'ry bar

But honour warm occasion hath remov'd,

These words austere utter'd: Am I chang'd?

No more Mardonius? Is my dazzling sun 435

Of pow'r and splendour suddenly obscur'd?

In state degraded, for a peasant's garb

Have I exchang'd my purple? Is my prime,

My form, in all th' impurities of age

By some malignant talisman disguis'd,

440

At once grown loathsome? Who, and what I am,

Thou prodigy of coldness and disdain,

Remind me. Who, and what thou art, she said,

26 THE ATHENIAD. Book XXI.

I will remind thee to confound thee more.

No characters of magic have the pow'r 445

To change a noble and ingenuous mind ;

Thou hast thyself degraded ; thou hast rent

The wreaths, which circle thy commanding brow,

And all their splendour wantonly defac'd.

Thy rank and pow'r exalted dost thou hold 450

From partial heav'n to violate the laws

Of men and gods ? True pattern to the world

Of Persian virtues ! Now to all thy pomp,

Thy steeds, thy chariots, and emblazing gems,

The gorgeous pageants of tyrannic state, 455

I leave thee, son of luxury and vice.

She said, and darted like a meteor swift

Away, whose aspect red presages woe

To superstition's herd. The Persian's pride

Is wounded ; tapers to the cell he calls ; 460

By

By them a tablet, unobserv'd before,
Attracts his gloomy eye. The words were these:

“ The Spartan king a visitant was here,
“ Who, by a tyrant's multitude o'erpow'r'd,
“ Died for his country. Be accurst the man, 465
“ The man impure, who violates these walls,
“ Which, by Oileus hospitably rais'd,
“ Receiv'd the great Leonidas a guest.
“ Oilean Medon this inscription trac'd.”

Another hangs beneath it in this strain : 470
“ Laconian Aemnestus rested here,
“ From Asia's camp return'd. His faulchion's point
“ To deities and mortals thus proclaims
“ His arm to vengeance on Mardonius pledg'd,
“ The king of Sparta's manes to appease.” 475

Brave was the son of Gobryas, like the god
Of war in battle; yet a dream, an act

28 THE ATHENAID. Book XXI.

Of froward chance, would oft depress his mind.
 He recollects with pain the challenge bold
 From that severe Laconian in the tent 480
 Of Xerxes ; this to Amarantha's scorn
 Succeeding, throws new darkness o'er his gloom.
 Masisius ent'ring hasty thus began :

What hast thou done, Mardonius ? When I led
 This princess back, indignant she complain'd 485
 Of wrong from thee. Thy countenance is griev'd.

Confus'd, Mardonius pointed to the scrolls ;
 Masisius read ; he took the word again :

Now in the name of Horomazes, chief,
 Art thou discourag'd by a Grecian vaunt, 490
 Or by that empty oracle which claim'd
 Atonement for Leonidas ? Despise
 Mysterious words and omens like a man

But

But if thou bear'st the conscience of a deed
 Unworthy, just thy sorrow ; like a man 495
 Feel due contrition, and the fault repair.

I have meant wrong, not acted, said the chief.

Greece once produc'd a Helen, who forsook
 A throne and husband ; what these later dames
 Call honour, which without an eunuch guard 500
 Protects their charms, in Asia is unknown.

Resentful, gall'd at first, I now admire
 This lofty woman, who, like Helen bright,
 Rejected me a lover, who surpasses
 The son of Priam. Thou art gentler far 505
 Than I, discreet Masistius ; sooth by morn
 With lenient words, and costly gifts, her ire.
 Call Mindarus, together let us feast ;
 He too is gentle, I am rough and hot,
 Whom thou canst guide, Masistius, thou alone. 510

Soon Mindarus appears in aspect sad;
Soon is the royal equipage produc'd,
Which Xerxes gave Mardonius to sustain
His delegated state. Ye rustic pow'rs !

Ye Dryads, Oreads of th' Oilean seat ! 515
Ye Naiads white of lucid brooks and founts !
Had you existence other than in tales
Of fancy, how had your astonish'd eyes
At piles of gold enrich'd by orient gems
Been dimm'd with lustre ? Genius of the cellar ! 520
Simplicity had fram'd to rural peace !
How hadst thou started at a Persian board ? before
Fair female minstrels charm the sight and ear ;
Effeminating measures on their lutes
Dissolve the soul in languor, which admits 525
No thought but love. Their voices chance directs
To sing of Daphnè by Apollo chas'd,
Of him inflam'd at beauties in her flight
Disclos'd,

Book XXI. THE ATHENAID.

31

Disclos'd, him reaching with a vain embrace

Those virgin beauties, into laurel chang'd 530

On flowry-bank'd Orontes, Syrian stream.

Mardonius sighs at disappointed love ;

Tears down the cheeks of Mindarus descend,

Recalling dear Cleora, not as dead

Recall'd, but living in another's arms.

535

Not so the firmness of Mafistius yields ;

The soft, lascivious theme his thoughts reject,

By pure affections govern'd. Yet the charm

Of harmony prevailing serves to raise

Compos'd remembrance of Melissa's lyre, 540

Which oft in stillness of a moon-light hour,

Amid her nymphs in symphony high-ton'd,

To moderation, equity, and faith,

To deeds heroic and humane she struck

C 4

With

32 THE ATHENAI'D. Book XXI.

With force divine, reproving lawless will, 545
Intemp'rate passions, turpitude of mind,
And savage manners in her ethic lay.

The banquet ends, and all depart to rest.

End of the Twenty-first Book.

THE ATHENIAD.

A T H E N A I D.

BOOK the TWENTY-SECOND.

BY morn return'd Masistius: Hear, he said,
 Th' event unpleasing from thy passion sprung.
 Mardonius, thy temerity hath chac'd
 From Persia's camp the Macedonian queen;
 I found her tent abandon'd; but her course 5
 Conjecture cannot trace. What other style
 Than of Barbarians can the Greeks afford
 To us of Asia? Lo! a youthful king,
 Our best ally, and my distinguish'd friend,
 Exerts a distant effort in our cause, 10

Meantime the honour of his queen, by all
 Ador'd, inviolate till now, our chief
 Insults, by station her protector sole,
 When I am absent. Not thyself alone
 Thou hast disgrac'd, but me her guardian pledg'd 15
 By sacred oaths to Macedonia's lord.

'These words, evincing nature's purest gifts,
 Deserving that society sublime
 With Grecian muses, where Melissa pour'd
 Her moral strain, in perturbation plunge 20
 The hearer; when importunate, abrupt
 Appears Briareus, and renew's the suit
 To pillage Delphi. No, in wrath replied
 The clouded son of Gobryas; bring my steed;
 March all to Thebes. Then humble as a child, 25
 Who to parental castigation owns
 His fault in tears, Mafistius he address'd:

How

Book XXII. THE ATHENAID. 35

How bless'd the mind by Horomazes fram'd
Like thine, serene Mafistius, to resist
Unruly passions ! never warm desires, 30
Pride, or ambition, vex thy equal thoughts,
Which from their level no dejection low'rs ;
Yet none surpasses thee in rank and pow'r
Among the satraps. Uncorrupted man !
O, in thyself superior to thy state, 35
Me, who so often sink below my own,
Befriend in this dark moment. I foresee,
I feel disaster in this harsh event.

Mafistius here : Reflect, thou mighty chief,
At either gate of life, the first and last, 40
Yet more through all their intermediate space,
Vicissitude and hazard lurk unseen,
Supplanting wary steps. To mortal pow'r
Those dreadful ministers of jealous heav'n,
The elements, are hostile, and to low'r 45
The great with changing fortune oft conspire.

36 THE ATHENAID. Book XXII.

Her cruel sport, Mardonius, need we tempt
 With our own follies? In thy arduous post
 Thy hand sustains a balance, where the lives
 Of nations, where an empire's fate is pois'd 50
 From hour to hour against the common ills
 Of chance and nature, which so often foil
 The wisest; do not super-add the weight
 Of thy own passions to the adverse scale.
 I, who am ever to thy virtues just, 55
 Will not be slow, though grieving at thy faults,
 To furnish present help. Farewell; I mount
 My swiftest courser to o'ertake the queen,
 Whose indignation I can best compose.

Mardonius then: Adventure is a chace 60
 Thy virtue, no idolatress of fame,
 Enjoys; thy prompters are the love of right,
 Care for a friend, or zeal for Persia's state,
 Which render hazardous attempts thy bliss,

Sublime

Book XXII. THE ATHENAID. 37

Sublime Masistius. Thou hast weight to awe 65
Mardonius, who thy enterprising hand
Laments, but never to controul assumes,
Yet feels and most regrets his own defects,
Whene'er they cause thy absence. Here they end
Discourse. Of cavalry a num'rous pow'r, 70
Train'd by himself, Masistius heads, and leaves
The army filing tow'rds Boeotian fields.

He bends his course to Delphi; he attains
Permessus, round the Heliconian heights
In argent mazes whisp'ring, as he flows, 75
To passengers along the winding way,
Which skirts the mountain, and o'erlooks the stream.
Back from the ford the satrap's courser starts
Affrighted. Lo! to crimson, as of blood,
In sudden change the late crystalline wave, 80
Melodious solace of the sacred nine,
Rolls horrible to view. Anon with helms,

With

38 THE ATHENAID. Book XXII.

With spears and bucklers, grating o'er the bed
 Of loosen'd stone, with limbs and trunks of men,
 The turbid current chafes. Mafistius spurs 85
 Through all obstruction ; in his forc'd career
 The clank of armour, crash of spears, and shouts
 Of battle strike his ear ; the vocal rocks
 Augment the animating sound ; he sees
 A flying soldier, by his target known 90
 A Macedonian guard, who stops, and thus :

Hail ! satrap, hail ! thou timely sent by heav'n,
 Haste and protect the Macedonian queen.
 A host of robbers, by the lawless times
 Combin'd, have vanquish'd our inferior force ; 95
 Part of our mangled number choak that flood,
 Part on the ground lie bleeding. At these words
 Mafistius rushes with his pond'rous lance
 In rest ; Emathia's beauteous queen in flight
 Before pursuing ruffians he perceives 100
 On

On her fleet courier. Thunderbolt of strength,
He hurls to earth their leader giant-siz'd,
A profligate deserter from the guard
Mardonian. Next a Phocian born, expell'd
His native residence for crimes, he flew; 105
The active staff is broken in the chest
Of an Arcadian, branded by his state
With infamy; the victor then unsheathes
His sabre, op'ning through the savage rout
A passage wide for death. His faithful train 110
Surround them; irresistible he sweeps
The traitors headlong to the flood below,
Which foams like Simois, by Pelides swohn
With Trojan dead, and struggling to discharge
Th' unwonted load in Neptune's briny waste. 115

The conqueror dismounts; before the queen
His gracious form presenting, in the arms
Of his sustaining friends he sudden sinks,

Oppress'd

Oppress'd by wounds unheeded, ev'n unfelt
 Amid the warmth of action. Then her veil 120
 She rends asunder, and, lamenting, beats
 Her grateful breast. The notes of sorrow, loud
 Through all the concourse, dissipate his trance.
 Serene these words he utters : Honour's track
 Is perilous, though lovely ; there to walk, 125
 Not fearing death, nor coveting his stroke,
 Though to receive it ever well prepar'd,
 Has been my choice and study. But, fair queen,
 Be not discourag'd at my present state,
 Wounds are to me familiar, and their cures ; 130
 To Delphi lead me, or whatever place,
 Thy wish prefers. Mafistius comes thy guard,
 So will continue, and, ere long restor'd,
 Hath much for thy instruction to impart.

While these to Delphi, on his march to Thebes
 Advanc'd the son of Gobryas. Soon the steps 136

Innumerous

II.
20
25
30
es
36
ous

Book XXII. THE ATHENAID. 41

Innumerous of men and coursers bruise
On green Cephissian meads the growth of May.
Copææ's lake, perfum'd with orange groves,
Which rude unsated violence deforms, 140
The multitudes envelop; thence along
The sedgy borders of Ismenus reach
Cadmœan walls, when now the golden sun
Sev'n times had fill'd his orbit. Thebes admits
The Persian gen'ral, in these words address'd 145
By Leontiades: Thrice welcome, lord,
We, thy allies, our counsel to disclose
Have waited long. Not hazarding a fight,
Thou hast the means to ascertain success:
Here seated tranquil, from exhaustless stores 150
Distribute gold among the Grecian states;
Corrupt the pow'ful, open faction's mouth,
Divide, nor doubt to overcome that strength,
Which, link'd in union, will surmount the force
Of all mankind. The ardent Persian here: 155

To

To court th' Athenians with a lavish hand
 Have I not stoop'd already? but, disdain'd,
 That haughty race to destiny I leave.
 Have I not bid defiance to their boast,
 Themistocles? Him, forfeiting his word, 160
 Pledg'd to confront me on Bœotian plains,
 I haste to summon at his native gates.
 What are the Greeks, if Athens be reduc'd?
 Where are the vaunted Spartans? lock'd in fear
 Behind their isthmian wall, by heav'n in fear 165
 Of Thorax ranging with a slender band
 Of his Thessalian horse. Thou rule in Thebes,
 Brave Mindarus, till I from Athens tam'd
 Return with fetters for the rest of Greece.

He seeks his couch, and, after short repose, 170
 By twilight bursts like thunder from a cloud,
 Which, on Olympus hov'ring black, contains
 The livid store of Jove's collected wrath

Against

II.
Book XXII. THE ATHENAI.D. 43

Against offending mortals. O'er a land
Deserted, silent, to the empty roofs 175
Of Athens was the march. Mardonius climb'd
Ægaleos, thence on Salamis descry'd
That much-enduring people, who again
For liberty forsook their native homes
On his approach. His gen'rous pride relents ; 180
He wishes such a nation were a friend ;
His wishes waken in his breast an awe
At such a foe. Murichides was nigh,
A Hellespontine Grecian of his train,
Nor in his favour low ; to him he spake : 185

Look on that haughty, but that gallant race ;
Perhaps at me, by myriads thus begirt,
Their very children lift their little hands
In menaces, and cursing lisp the names
Of Xerxes and Mardonius. Mount a bark ; 190
Pass with a herald to that crowded isle ;

The

44 THE ATHENAIID. Book XXII.

The senators accost; the people shun,
In pride beyond nobility; repeat
The words Æmathian Alexander us'd:
“ Ye men of Athens, reposess your homes; ” 195
“ Enlarg'd dominion from the royal hand
“ Ask and obtain; be govern'd by your laws;
“ The son of Gobryas will rebuild your fanes;
“ Accept the king's alliance, and be free
“ With added strength and splendour.” Further say,
They little know what confidence is due 201
To him who sends thee. Asian Greeks, subdu'd
By me, retain their democratic rights.

On Salamis the Hellespontine lands;
Before th' Athenian senate he displays 205
The Persian proffer. All indignant hear
But Lycides, who thus exhorting spake:

From Athens twice expell'd, deserted twice
By Lacedæmon, who her toil employs

Still

Book XXII. THE ATHENAID. 45

Still on her isthmian fence, who lifts no shield 210
To guard our wives and progeny, to save
From desolation our defenceless fields,
Or from our homes repel the hostile blaze,
What can we better, injur'd and betray'd,
Than listen to Mardonius? be referr'd 215
His terms of friendship to th' assembling tribes.

The universal senate rose in scorn
Of such submission. By the people known,
His counsel rous'd enthusiastic rage,
Nor Aristides can the tumult cool; 220
They stoned the timid senator to death.
The women catch the spirit; fierce, as fair,
Laodice collects th' infuriate sex.
They hand in hand a dreadful circle form
Around his mansion, and his wife and race 225
Doom to perdition, that his coward blood
May ne'er survive in Greece. Enormous thought!

46 THE ATHENAIID. Book XXII.

Perhaps not less than such excess of zeal
Excess of peril in that season claim'd
To save a land, which foster'd ev'ry muse; 230
That eloquence, philosophy and arts
Might shine in Attic purity of light
To latest ages: but a sudden fleet,
In wide array extending on the shore,
Suspends the deed. Before each wond'ring eye 235
Timothea lands, Sicinus at her side;
When thus the matron to th' impatient throng:

His native friends Themistocles salutes;
Eubœan plenty in your present need
He sends. Returning, I this crowded isle 240
Will disencumber, and to safety bear
Your wives and infants; open to their wants
Eudora holds her Amarynthian seat;
Elephenor, Tisander to the shrines
Of Jove invite them, and to friendly roofs 245

Eubœa's

Book XXII. THE ATHENAID. 47

Eubœa's towns. As oft Aurora sheds
Serenity around her, when the gates
Of light first open to her fragrant step;
Hush'd at her feet lies Boreas, who had rent
The dusky pall of night, and Jove restrains 250
The thunder's roar, and torrents of the skies;
Such was Timothea's presence, so the storm,
By furies late excited, at her voice
Was tame. She learns the melancholy fate
Of Lycides, to her protection takes 255
His helpless orphans, and disastrous wife.

Now of its plenteous stores while eager hands
The num'rous fleet unlade, and Attic dames
Prepare with good Timothea to embark;
Just Aristides, first of men, conducts 260
That first of matrons to his joyful tent,
Where she began: O righteous like the gods,
Now hear my whole commission, and believe
Themistocles,

48 THE ATHENIAD. Book XXII.

Themistocles, my husband, feels thy worth.

When at his summons on Eubœa's coast 265

I landed first, "Thrice welcome," he exclaim'd,

"From Athens hither to a safe abode.

"A second emigration I presage

"To her afflicted race." From port to port

Around Eubœa's populous extent

270

With him convey'd, I saw her wealthy towns

To his controul subordinate. Their pow'r's

He now is gath'ring; some achievement new

He meditates, which secrefy conceals

Like fate's dark roll inscrutable to all.

275

From thee an early notice he requests,

Soon as the Greeks, united in one camp,

The sole attention of Mardonius draw;

Th' intelligence to bring I leave behind

That faithful man, Sisinus. Virtuous dame, 280

Wife is thy husband, Aristides spake;

From him no other than achievements high,

However

Book XXII. THE ATHENAID. 49

However my conjecture they surpass,
I still expect. Themistocles apprise,
That I am bound for Sparta to upbraid 285
Pausanias proud, and summon to the field
That selfish breed so martial, yet so cold
To public welfare. Let me next prefer
To thy benignity a fervent suit.

He straight withdrew, and reappearing led 290
Two little damsels humble in attire.

Behold my daughters, he resum'd; admit
These to thy care; now motherless they want
Protection; ev'n Euphemia they have lost;
My venerable parent have the gods 295
Releas'd but newly from the growing scene
Of trouble. Athens must a parent prove
To these hereafter, fated to receive
No portion from a father, who delights

50 THE ATHENAID. Book XXII.

In poverty. His arms are all the wealth 300
Of Aristides. With a tender hand
She takes the children: O! of men, she said,
Most rich, whose wealth is virtue, in the name
Of household gods this office I accept.
O Aristides! these shall mix with mine; 305
These shall contribute to cement the work,
I long have wrought, the amity begun
Betwixt Themistocles and thee. In tears
Depart the infant maidens from a fire
Of gentlest nature, and in manners bland 310
Not less, than just. Meanwhile to Athens steers
Murichides unharmed. The rising dawn
Sees with her precious charge Timothea sail.

Lo! from the city clouds of smoke ascend
Voluminous, with interlacing flames, 315
Such as Vesuvius vomits from his gulph
Sulphureous, when unquenchable the heat

Within

Book XXII. THE ATHENAID. 51

Within his concave melts the surging ore
To floods of fire. Murichides had told
His fruitless embassy ; Mardonius, wild 320
With ire, to instant conflagration doom'd
Th' abode of such inexorable foes.
They, on the margin opposite, beheld
Their ancient residence a second time
Destroy'd ; nor utter'd more than just complaint 325
Of tardy Sparta. When Briareus dire
With his gigantic savages o'erturn'd
The recent tomb, which held the glorious slain
At Salamis ; when scatter'd in the wind
They saw that dust rever'd ; in solemn rage, 330
Devoid of sound illiberal, or loud,
Each his right hand with sanctity of oaths
Pledg'd to his neighbour, and to vengeance full
His blood devoted. Aristides look'd,
As some incens'd divinity, and spake : 335

D 2 Persif,

52 THE ATHENAID. Book XXII.

Persist, ye sons of folly; crush that tomb;
The last repose of yon heroic slain
Disturb, therein exhibiting your doom
From mortals, and immortals. Thus your pride
By heav'n, and Grecian valour, shall be crush'd, 340
Your impious host be scatter'd like that dust
Which your barbarity profanes. Now, friends,
By your appointment I to Sparta sail;
You under watchful discipline remain
Compos'd and firm; such patience will surmount
All obstacle, Athenians; will restore
In brighter glories your paternal seats. 346

This said, the isle he leaves, selecting none,
But Cimon for associate. In the bark
Him Aristides placidly bespeak: 350

Son of Miltiades the great in arms,
Thy early youth was dissolute; thy look
Ingenuous still, and frank thy tongue, reveal'd

Book XXII. THE ATHENAID. 53

Internal virtue; friendship on my part
Succeeded, thence a study to reclaim 355

Thy human frailties. I rejoice in hope,
Thou wilt hereafter prove an Attic star,
In council wise, triumphant in the field,
Humane to strangers, to thy country just,
Friend to her laws, to all her Muses kind, 360
Who may record thy actions. Cimon here:

If I have virtues, they proceed from thee;
If I attain to glory, I shall owe 365
To thee my lustre. To deserve thy praise,
What have I yet accomplish'd? I have fought
At Salamis, what more performing there
Than each Athenian? Aristides then:

True, all were brave; my judgment doth not rest
On one exploit; thy modesty o'erlooks 369
The signs of worth and talents, whence my hopes.

D 3

Have

54 THE ATHENAIID. Book XXII.

Have rank'd thee first of Grecians. To acquire,
 To keep that station, Cimon, be thy choice;
 Thou hast the means; but this impression hold,
 Who would excel, must be a moral man.

Thus they exhaust their voyage of a day, 375
 When at Træzenè they arrive, and find
 Renown'd Cleander training for the field
 His native bands. To Sparta thence they sail.
 The Ephori assemble, when they hear
 Of Aristides, who an audience claims; 380
 He comes before them, and austere thus:

Cecropia's race, exterminated twice,
 Demand of Sparta, whether sloth, or fear,
 Or Persian gold her buckler hath unbrac'd.
 Mardonius proffer'd more than equal terms, 385
 Not friendship singly, but enlarg'd domain
 To Athens, who to eleutherian Jove,

To

Book XXII. THE ATHENAI'D. 55

To Greece was faithful, and the lib'ral gift
Disdain'd. Your own ambassador pronounc'd
Your phalanx ready; for its speedy march 390
His head he pledg'd. Mardonius takes the field,
He lays th' Athenian territory waste;
Where are the Spartans? Adding work to work
For their own sep'rate safety at their wall,
Inglorious isthmian wall, while half the Greeks 395
Become your foes, and Athens is betray'd.

Pausanias present proudly thus replied:
Hast thou not heard, the Hyacinthian rites
Employ the Spartans? shall the heads of Greece
Be question'd, be directed when to act 400
By you Athenians? your inferior state
May wait our leisure. Aristides here:

Talk'st thou to me of Hyacinthian games,
While rude Barbarians riot in our fields,

56 THE ATHENAID. Book XXII.

While Athens burns, while sacrilege invades 405
Our temples, while our ancestors we see
Torn from the grave? Pausanias, thou disgrace
To thy forefather Hercules, whose arm,
To friends a bulwark, was a scourge to foes,
What hast thou said? But, guardian to the son 410
Of that renown'd Leonidas, who fought
Beyond the isthmus, and for Greece expir'd,
If thou retain'st no rev'rence for his blood,
If thou dost scorn Lycurgus and his laws,
If holding liberty an empty name, 415
Art now in treaty with a lawless king,
No more of words. Athenians have their choice
To treat with Xerxes, or to distant climes
Expand the sail, resigning to their fate
Unfaithful, timid Grecians, who have lost 420
All claim to succour—Yet assume your swords!
My love for Greece solicits you in tears.
Be thou, Pausanias, general of all;

We

We in that noble warfare will refuse
 No hardship—Ev'n thy arrogant command 425
 I like the meanest soldier will abide.

Then Aëmnestus brief: O righteous man,
 I feel thy wrongs; Laconia's shame I feel,
 Which if delay still blackens, thou shalt lead
 Me, the due victim of Athenian wrath, 430
 Before those injur'd tribes, by me deceiv'd;
 Where my own sword shall sacrifice the blood,
 I pledg'd for Sparta's faith. Meantime withdraw;
 I was thy guest in Athens, thou be mine.

Not till the day-spring Aëmnestus greets 435
 His Attic friend: Our citizens are march'd;
 All night my indefatigable toil
 Hath urg'd the phalanx on; the various states
 Within the isthmus will obey our call;
 Now speed with me, o'ertake, inspect our host. 440

58 THE ATHENAID. Book XXII.

They both depart with Cimon. Sparta's camp,
Ere Phœbus couches, Aristides gains ;
The marshall'd pupils of Lycurgus there
He, ever true to equity, applauds,
Who their disgraceful sloth in council blam'd. 445
Subordination, silent order held
Each in his place ; in look, as virgins, meek,
Sedate they listen'd to their chiefs, as youth
To learning's voice in academic schools.
Thus in some fertile garden well-manur'd, 450
The regularity of plants and trees
Enrich'd with produce, on a stable root
Stands permanent, by skilful care dispos'd
At first, and sedulously watch'd. No vaunt
Offends the ear, nor supercilious frown. 455
Of confidence the eye. Th' Athenian chief
Content returns ; on Salamis receiv'd,
Cecropia's bands he marshals for the field.

The

Book XXII. THE ATHENAID. 59

The ravage still of Attica detain'd
Mardonius. Thorax of Larissa quits 460
His isthmian station; rapid in his course
To Gobryas' son these tidings he imparts:

The isle of Pelops musters all her pow'rs;
The isthmus swarms; forsake this rocky land
For cavalry unfit; collect thy force 465
To face the Grecians on Cadmean plains.

Her sleepy sword at last has Sparta rous'd,
Replies Mardonius? On Cadmean plains
The Persian trump shall sound; Cithæron's hill,
Asopian banks, shall soon repeat the notes 470
Triumphal. Swift he rushes back to Thebes,
Ere Phœbus darted his solstitial heat.
As some hot courser, who from pasture led
Replete with food and courage, spurns the ground
In confidence and pride, no sooner meets 475

60 THE ATHENAID. Book XXII.

His wonted rider, than admits the rein ;
Such was Mardonius, when from Theban gates
Masistius thus address'd him : Be inform'd,
That Macedonia's sov'reign is arriv'd,
With his fair consort. Her to Delphi's walls 480
I guarded, there deliver'd to her lord,
Who hath conducted fifty thousand Greeks
In arms, auxiliar to thy camp. The queen,
Now at a fabric old, to Dircè built,
Close by her fountain, and beset with shade, 485
Dwells in retreat, which careful thou avoid.
But tell me, son of Gobryas, whither flown
Was all thy magnanimity, when flames
A second time laid stately Athens low ?
Though disappointed, couldst thou deem a crime
Her constancy, refusing to betray 490
A common cause ? Mardonius, thou dost hope
To conquer ; why a city of renown,
Which in her beauty would have grac'd our sway,

Hast

Book XXII. THE ATHENAID. 61

Hast thou reduc'd to ashes ? Oh ! reflect, 495

What fires of stern resistance and revenge
This act hath lighted in such gallant hearts.

That pow'r eternal, by the hallow'd name 496

Of Horomazes worshipp'd in our clime, 497

Who earth and seas and firmament controuls, 500

With all therein, looks down not less on Greece,

Than Persia, both his creatures. Just and wise,

Intemp'rate deeds in either he resents.

Mardonius answer'd : By that pow'r I swear,
Thou to a Grecian almost art transform'd 505

By intercourse with yon religious hill

Of thy admir'd Melissa. Do I blame ?

Ah ! no ; too awful art thou to incur

My censure. O Masistius, I confess

Thy genius purer, more sublime, than mine ; 510

I often err, thou never—But, dear friend,

I am dejected ever when thou chid'st ;

Yet

62 THE ATHENAID. Book XXII.

Yet thee, my chiding monitor, should fate
Snatch from Mardonius, he would rise no more.

I only seek to warn thee, not deject, 515
Rejoins Masistius; turn to other cares;
Greece is in arms; address thee to thy charge.

This said, to council they in Thebes proceed.

End of the Twenty-second Book.

A T H E N A I D.

BOOK the TWENTY-THIRD.

THE Heliconian records now unfold,
 Calliope ! harmonious thence recite
 The names and numbers of the various Greeks,
 Who in array on fair Bœotian plains,
 With gleams of armour streak the twinkling wave
 Of clear Asopus. Trœzen known to fame, 6
 Where Pittheus dwelt, whose blood to Athens gave
 The hero Theseus, Trœzen from her walls
 In circuit small, from Hylycus her stream,
 From her Scyllæan promontory high,

From

64 THE ATHENAID. Book XXIII.

From vine-attir'd Methenè, from the isles,
Calauria, Neptune's seat, and Sphæria dear
To Pallas, daughter of almighty Jove,
Two thousand warriors sends. Cleander pass'd
The isthmus first; who manly, from the bed 115
Of Aripilia rising, vow'd to deck
Her future cradle with a victor's wreath
Of laurel new. Her beauteous image grac'd
His four-fold buckler. Twice eight hundred youths
From Æsculapian Epidaurus march'd, 20
From mount Cynortius, and the sacred hill,
Titheon, where the mother of that god
Medicinal in secret left her fruit
Of stolen enjoyment in Apollo's arms;
Where in serenity of smiles was found 25
The sweet Phœbean child, while lambent flames
Play'd round his temples. Clitophon the chief,
A serpent green, the symbol of his god,
Bore on his silver shield. Four hundred left

Lepreum,

Book XX.II. THE ATHENAID. 65

Lepréum, clear Arenè, and th' impure 30
Anigrian waters, where the centaur, fell
Polenor, wounded by Herculean shafts,
Dipp'd in the blood of Hydra, purg'd his limbs
From putrid gore, envenoming the stream ;
Their leader Conon. Of Mycenæ old, 35
Of Tiryns, built by fam'd Cyclopian toil,
Eight hundred shields Polydamas commands.
Two thousand gallant youths, with standards bles'd
At Hebe's altar, tutelary pow'r
Of Phlius, bold Menander led to war. 40
Himself was young ; the blooming goddess shone
Bright on his buckler. Under Lycus brave
Hermionè, fair city, had enroll'd
Six hundred spears. The impress on his shield
Was strong Alcides, dragging from the gates 45
Of Dis their latrant guardian triple-mouth'd
Through an abyss in Hermionean land,
The fabled wonder of the district shewn.

Three

66 THE ATHENAID. Book XXIII.

Three thousand sail'd from Cephallenia's isle,
From Acarnanian, and Epirot shores, 50
With various chieftains. Of Arcadian breed
Orchomenus twelve hundred, Tegea sent
Three thousand. Chileus, prime in 'Tegea's camp,
Was skill'd in arms, and vaunted high the name,
The rank and proweſs of his native ſtate. 55
Ten thouſand helms from wealthy Corinth's walls
Blaze o'er the champaign; theſe Alcmæon leads
With Adimantus. Neighb'ring Sicyon arm'd
Six thouſand more; amidſt whose ſplendid files
Automedon commanded. Lo! in air 60
A mighty banner! from the hollows green,
The wood-crown'd hills in Lacedæmon's rule,
Taijgetus, and Menelaian ridge,
From Crocean quarries, from Gythēum's port,
Therapnè, ſweet Amyclæ on the banks 65
Of fam'd Eurotas, from a hundred towns,
A glitt'ring myriad of Laconians shew

Their

Book XXIII. THE ATHENAIID. 67

Their just arrangement. Aemnestus there
Lifts his tall spear, and rises o'er his ranks
In arduous plumes and stature. So the strength 70
And stately foliage of a full-grown oak
O'erlooks the undershades, his knotted arms
Above their tops extending. Mightier still
Callicrates appears, in martial deeds
Surpassing ev'ry Grecian. He his fate 75
Foresees not; he, capricious fortune's mark,
Must fall untimely, and his gen'rous blood
Unprofitably shed. A firmer band
Succeeds. Huge Sparta, who forever scorn'd
Defensive walls and battlements, supplied 80
Five thousand citizens close-mail'd; a train
Of sev'n bold Helots exercis'd in arms,
Attend each warrior; there Pausanias tow'r'd.
In pride the son of Atreus he surpass'd
Without his virtues, a superior host 85
Commanding. Never Greece such heroes sent,

Nor

68 THE ATHENIAD. Book XXIII.

Nor such a pow'r in multitude to war;
For landed recent on the neighb'ring shore
Th' Athenian phalanx opens broad in sight
Their eleutherian banner. They advance 90
Eight thousand men at arms; an equal force
In archers, slingers, missile-weapon'd sons
Of terror follow. Round her naval flag
Already four bold myriads from her loins
Had Attica enroll'd. What chiefs preside! 95
Themistocles, Xanthippus in remote,
But glorious action; Aristides here,
Myronides and Cimon, Clinias, sire
Of Alcibiades, the warrior bard,
Young Pericles, and more than time hath seen 100
Since or before, in arts and arms renown'd.

The ancient foe of Athens, yet averse
Like her to Xerxes, Megara enroll'd
Six thousand warriors. From Ægina sail'd
A thousand.

A thousand. Twice six hundred, Phœnix-like, 105
Sprung from the ashes of Platæa burnt,
With Arimnestus march'd, th' intrepid friend
Of him, whose deeds Thermopylæ resounds,
Diomedon. From Thespia, who had shar'd
Platæa's doom, two thousand came unarm'd, 110
Unclad, a want by Attic stores supplied.
Alcimedon was chief, of kindred blood
To Dithyrambus; whom, his early bloom
For Greece devoting, on Melissa's hill
The Muses sing and weep. Between the roots 115
Of tall Cithæron, and th' Asopian floods,
The army rang'd. The Spartans on the right
One wing compos'd; the men of Tegea claim'd
The left in pref'rence to th' Athenian host.
Contention rose; Pausanias sat the judge, 120
Callicrates and Aemnestus wise,
His two assessors; thick Laconian ranks
A circle form; when Chileus thus asserts

The

70 THE ATHENAID. Book XXIII.

The claim of Tegea : Spartans, from the time,
The early time, that Echemus, our king, 125
In single combat on the listed field
O'erthrew the invader Hyllus, and preserv'd
Unspoil'd the land of Pelops, we obtain'd
From all her sons unanimous this post,
Whene'er united in a common cause 130
They march'd to battle. Not with you we strive,
Ye men of Sparta, at your choice command
In either wing ; the other we reclaim
From Athens ; brave and prosp'rous we have join'd
Our banners oft with yours ; our deeds you know ;
To ours superior what can Athens plead 136
Of recent date, or ancient ? for what cause
Should we our just prerogative resign ?

Then Aristides spake: Collected here
Are half the Grecians to contend in arms 140
With Barbarous invaders, not in words
Each

Book XXIII. THE ATHENAIID. 71

Each with the other for precedence vain.

From his own volume let the tongue of time,

Not mine, proclaim my countrymen's exploits

In early ages. In his course he views

145

The varying face of nature, sea to land,

Land turn'd to sea, proud cities sink in dust,

The low exalted, men and manners change,

From fathers brave degen'rate sons proceed,

And virtuous children from ignoble fires.

150

What we are now, you, Grecians, must decide

At this important crisis. Judges, fix

On Marathon your thoughts, that recent stage

Of preservation to the public weal,

Where fifty nations, arm'd to conquer Greece, 155

We unassisted foil'd; more fresh, the day

Of Salamis recall. Enough of words;

No more contention for the name of rank;

The bravest stand the foremost in the fight

Of gods and mortals. As to you is meet, 160

Determine,

72 THE ATHENAID. Book XXIII.

Determine, Spartans ; at your will arrange
Th' Athenians ; they acknowledge you the chiefs
Of this great league, for gen'ral safety fram'd,
Wherever plac'd, obedient they will fight.

The sense of all his countrymen he breath'd, 165
Who for the public welfare in this hour
Their all relinquish, and their very pride
A victim yield to virtue. From his seat,
Inspir'd by justice, Aemnestus rose :

Brave as they are, our friends of Tegea seem 170
To have forgot the Marathonian field,
The Salaminian trophies ; else this strife
Had ne'er alarm'd the congregated host
Of states so various and remote. As brief
Callicrates subjoins : Not less our friends 175
Of Tegea seem forgetful, that their claim

Within

Book XXIII. THE ATHENAID. 73

Within the ifthmus is confin'd, the gift
Of part, not binding universal Greece.

Athenian moderation had before
Won ev'ry Spartan ; loud they found the name 180
Of Athens, Athens, whose pretension just
The general confirms, restoring peace.
So in a chorus full the manly bass
Directs the pow'r of harmony to float
On equal pinions, and attune the air. 185

Now Sparta's wide encampment on the right
Was form'd ; sedate and silent was the toil,
As is the concourse of industrious ants,
In mute attention to their public cares.
Extending thence, successive states erect 190
Their standards. On the left their num'rous tents
Th' Athenians pitch. In labour not unlike
The buzzing tenants of sonorous hives,

74 THE ATHENAID. Book XXIII.

Loquacious they and lively cheer the field,
 Yet regularly heed each signal giv'n 195
 By staid commanders. Underneath a fringe
 Of wood, projecting from Cithæron's side,
 Ascends the chief pavilion. Seated there
 Is Aristides at a frugal board,
 An aged menial his attendant sole; 200
 But from the tribes selected, round him watch
 An hundred youths, whose captain is the son
 Of fam'd Miltiades. The neighb'ring bed
 Of pure Asopus, from Cithæron's founts,
 Refreshment inexhaustible contain'd. 205
 His arms th' Athenian patriot in his tent
 Was now exploring, when he hears the step
 Of Aemnestus ent'ring, who began :

Most wise of men and righteous, whom all Greece,
 Not Athens singly, as her glory claims, 210
 Grant me an hour. Laconian laws, thou know'ft,
 Subordination

Book XXIII. THE ATHEN AID. 75

Subordination to excess enjoin.

I am obedient to the man, who holds
Supreme command by office, rank, and birth,
While thee my heart confesses and admits

215

My sole adviser. Haughty and morose,
O'er uncommunicated thoughts will brood
Our dark Pausanias; I may often want
Thy counsel; now instruct me. Is it meet,

We cross th' Asopus to assail the foe,
Or wait his coming? Let him come, replies
The Attic sage; let bold invaders court
A battle, not th' invaded, who must watch
Occasion's favour. Present in thy mind

Retain, that Greece is center'd in this host,

225

Which if we hazard lightly were a crime,
Th' offended gods with fetters would chastise:
Our Attic flame to sudden onset points,
By me discourag'd. Aemnestus then:]

Know, that with me Callicrates unites ; 230
 Farewell ; thy wisdom shall direct us both.

The sun was set ; th' unnumber'd eyes of heav'n
 Thin clouds envelop'd ; dusky was the veil
 Of night, not sable ; placid was the air ;
 The low-ton'd current of Asopus held 235
 No other motion than his native flow,
 Alluring Aristides in a walk
 Contemplative to pace the stable verge
 Attir'd in moss. The hostile camp he views,
 Which by Masistian vigilance and art 240
 With walls of wood and turrets was secur'd.
 For this the groves of Jupiter supreme
 On Hypatus were spoil'd, Teumessian brows,
 Mesabius, Parnes, were uncover'd all.
 Square was th' inclosure, ev'ry face emblaz'd 245
 With order'd lights. Each elevated tent
 Of princely satraps, and, surmounting all,

Mardonius,

Book XXIII. THE ATHENAIID. 77

Mardonius, thine, from coronets of lamps
Shot lustre, soft'ning on the distant edge
Of wide Platæan fields. A din confus'd 250
Proclaim'd Barbarians ; silent was the camp
Of Greece. These thoughts the spectacle excites
In Aristides : Slender is thy bound,
Asopus, long to separate such hosts,
Or keep thy silver wave from blood unstain'd. 255
Lord of Olympus ! didst thou want the pow'r,
Or, boundless pow'r possessing, want the will
Thy own created system to secure
From such destruction ? Wherefore on this plain
Is Europe thus, and adverse Asia met 260
For human carnage ? Natural this search,
Yet but a waste of reason. Let me shun
Unprofitable wand'rings o'er the land
Obscure of trackless mystery ; to see
The path of virtue open is enough. 265
Whate'er the cause of evil, he, who knows

78 THE ATHENAID. Book XXIII.

Himself not partner in that cause, attains
 Enough of knowledge; all the rest is dream
 Of falsely-styl'd philosophy. My task
 Is to destroy the enemies of Greece; 270
 Be active there, my faculties, and lose
 Nor time, nor thought. Revisiting his tent,
 Sicinus call'd apart he thus instructs:

Return, discreet and faithful, to the son
 Of Neocles; thy own observing eye 275
 Will prompt thy tongue; this notice sole I send.
 We will not hurry to a gen'ral fight.
 Blefs in my name Timothea; bless her sons,
 Her daughters; nor, good man, o'erlook my own.

Six monthly periods of the solar course 280
 Were now cđmplete; intense the summer glow'd.
 The patient Greeks for eight successive days
 Endure the insults of Barbarian horse

Behind

Book XXIII. THE ATHENAID. 79

Behind their lines ; when eager to his friend
The Persian gen'ral : Best belov'd of men, 285
Impart thy counsel. Lo ! this vaunted race
Lurk in their trenches, and avoid the plain.

To him Masistius : I have mark'd a post
Accessible and feeble in their line.

To me thy choicest cavalry commit, 290
I at the hazard of my life will gall,
Perhaps may force that quarter. Ah ! my friend,
Mardonius answer'd, shall thy precious life
Be hazarded ? let others take the charge,
Briareus, Midias, Tiridates brave, 295
Or Mindarus ; a thousand leaders bold
This host affords. Masistius, in the gloom
Of midnight from my pillow I discern'd
Thy gracious figure on a steed of fire ;
Who bore thee up to heav'n, where sudden folds 300
Of radiant vapour wrapp'd thee from my view.

80 THE ATHENAID. Book XXIII.

At once throughout th' innumerable tents
Their hue was chang'd to black; Bœotia's hills
And caves with ejulation from the camp
Rebelow'd round; the camels, horses, mules, 305
Diffolv'd in tears. Let Mithra's angry beam
Pierce this right arm, annihilate my strength,
And melt my courage! I will rest content
To purchase thus the safety of my friend.

Masistius answer'd: Son of Gobryas, learn, 310
That he, who makes familiar to his mind
The certainty of death, and nobly dares
In virtue's clear pursuit, may look serene
On boding dreams, and auguries averse.
No sign, but honour, he requires; he wants 315
No monitor, but duty. An attempt,
My observation hath maturely weigh'd,
Belongs to me; to others less inform'd
I will not leave the danger. Quick reply•

Disturb'd

Book XXIII. THE ATHENAID. 81

Disturb'd Mardonius, while at friendship's warmth
Ambition melts, and honour fills his breast : 321

O ! worthier far than frail Mardonius, take
O'er all the host of Xerxes chief command ;
Me from temptation, him from danger guard.

Again Masistius : Son of Gobryas, peace ; 325
My ear is wounded. Ever dost thou sink
Below the level of thy worth with me,
With others soar'st too high. What means the word
Temptation ? what this danger to the king ?
O satrap ! listed by his grace so high, 330
Thou hast o'erwhelm'd Masistius. May the God
Of truth and justice strengthen in thy soul
The light ingenuous, which so much reveals ;
That sense of duty may suppress a thought,
I dare not clothe in language. Still in mind 335

82 THE ATHENAID. Book XXIII.

The parting words of Artemisia bear,
 Which in its blameless moments oft thy tongue
 Repeats with admiration. “Look,” she said,
 “Look only, where no mystery can lurk,
 “On ev’ry manly duty. Nothing dark 340
 “O’ershades the track of virtue; plain her path;
 “But superstition, chosen for a guide,
 “Misleads the best and wisest.” Let me add,
 Worse is the guide ambition, which misleads
 To more than error, to atrocious acts. 345

I shall despair, Masihius, if thou fall’st,
 Rejoins Mardonius. Must Masihius then
 Confort with women, shut from noble deeds,
 Subjoins the virtuous Persian? Can thy hand,
 Thy friendly hand, now rivetted in mine, 350
 Of my degree, and dignity of birth
 Deprive me, or obliterate the name

With

With all its lustre, which my fathers left
Me to uphold? Or wouldest thou, if impow'r'd,
Taint my firm spirit with an eunuch's fear, 355
Among their feeble train my rank confine,
My strength unnerve, my fortitude debase?
While these subsist with titles, wealth and state,
While, as I pass, the crouding myriads shout,
Here comes Mafistius; what is less requir'd 360
From him, than deeds to manifest a soul,
Which merits such distinction? We again
This day will meet, Mardonius—but as none
Of human texture can the flight foresee
Of that inevitable dart, which soon, 365
Or late will strike, I leave these words behind.
If, blinded still by superstition's cloud,
Thou wilt believe me in this hour the mark
Of fate, retain them, as my dying words:
Ambition curb; let virtue be thy pride. 370

They separated sad; Mardonius still
 Foreboding evil to his noble friend,
 He at the frailty of Mardonius griev'd.

Masistius, soon collecting round his tent
 The prime of Persian cavalry, bespeak 375
 Their captains thus: Your steeds and arms prepare;
 String well your bows, your quivers store with
 shafts;
 With num'rous javelins each his courser load.
 I am this day your gen'ral; I rely
 On your known prowess; and I trust, the hand 380
 Of Horomazes will conduct you back
 Victorious; but remember, that the brave
 In life, or death, accomplishing their part,
 Are happy. All, rejoicing in a chief
 Belov'd, his orders sedulous fulfil. 385
 In arms, more splendid than for Peleus' son
 Th' immortal artist forg'd, Masistius cas'd
 His

Book XXIII. THE ATHENAIID. 85

His limbs of beauteous frame, and manly grace,
To match that hero, whom Scamander saw
With Dardan blood imbru'd. In hue of snow 390
His horse, of all Nisaea's breed the choice,
Caparison'd in rubies, champs the gold,
Which rules his mouth; his animated mane
Floats o'er the bridle, form'd of golden braid.

His page was nigh, that youth of eastern race,
Whom for his merit pure Melissa gave 396
To this benignant satrap. To ascend
His gorgeous seat preparing, thus the chief:

If I return a conqueror this day,
To that excelling dame who made thee mine, 400
Who hath enlarg'd whate'er of wise and great,
Of just and temp'rate I to nature owe,
Refin'd my manners, and my purest thoughts
Exalted, I my friendship will prolong

In

86 THE ATHENAID. Book XXIII.

In gratitude and rev'rence; blessing heav'n,⁴⁰⁵
Which thus prefers Masisius to extend
Benevolence to virtue. If I fall,⁴¹⁰
Resume with her the happiest lot my care
Can recommend, Statirus. Though no Greek,⁴¹⁵
Her pupil, say, in offices humane
Hath not been tardy; by her light inspir'd,⁴²⁰
He went more perfect to a noble grave.

End of the Twenty-third Book.

THE

A T H E N A I D.

BOOK the TWENTY-FOURTH.

WHILE thus Mafistius for the field prepar'd,
At sacrifice amidst the diff'rent chiefs
Pausanias stood, the entrails to consult
For heav'n's direction. Like a god rever'd
Among the Spartans, was an augur fam'd, 5
Tisamenus. The Pythian had declar'd
Him first of prophets; he the rites performs;
The victim open'd he inspects, and thus
In solemn tone: Hear, Grecians, and obey
The will of Jove. To pass th' Asopian flood 10
Forbear;

Forbear. With Persian fetters in her hand
 Ill fortune seated on that bank I see,
 On this the laurel'd figure of success.

The augur ceas'd ; when suddenly in view
 Th' Asopian current, overswelling, foams 15
 With eastern squadrons, wading through the fords.
 Bounds in the van Mafistius on a steed,
 Whose glift'ning hue the brightest of the four
 Which drew th' irradiate axle of the morn
 Might scarce outshine. Erect the hero sat, 20
 Firm as the son of Danaë by Jove,
 When his strong pinion'd Pegasus he wheel'd
 Through Æthiopian air from death to guard
 Andromeda his love. In rapid haste
 A herald greets Pausanias : From the men 25
 Of Megara I come. A post advanc'd,
 The most obnoxious in the Grecian line
 To harassing assaults, their daily toil

With

Book XXIV. THE ATHEN AID. 89

With unabating firmness long has held.

Unwonted numbers of Barbarian horse 30

Now sweep the field; a reinforcement send,

Her standard else will Megara withdraw.

Pausanias then, alike to try the Greeks,
And save his Spartans, answer'd: Chiefs, you hear;
Who will be foremost to sustain our friends? 35

Through fear the dang'rous service is declin'd
By many. Indignation to behold
No Spartans offer'd, but the arduous task
Impos'd on others, held Cleander mute;
When Aristides: Herald, swift return,
Athenian aid might else prevent thy speed. 40

The patriot spake, and left the Greeks amaz'd,
Well knowing Athens with abhorrence look'd

On

On Megara, her envious, ranc'rous foe

Of ancient date, whom now she flies to aid. 45

Meantime that feeblest station of the camp

Th' impetuous Asian cavalry surround.

As clouds, impregnated with hail, discharge

Their stormy burden on a champaign rich

In ripen'd grain, and lay the crackling rows 50

Of Ceres prostrate; under sheets of darts,

With arrows barb'd and javelins, thus whole ranks

Of Megara, by wounds or death o'erthrown,

Gasp on the ground. Alcathöus expires,

The blood of Nisus, Megarensian prince 55

In times remote, and fabled to have held

His fate dependent on a purple hair

Amidst his hoary locks. That vital thread

His impious daughter sever'd, blind with love

For Minos, Cretan king, her father's foe. 60

Masistius pierc'd him; javelins from his arm

Incessant

Book XXIV. THE ATHENAIID. 91

Incessant flew ; on heaps of nameless dead
He laid Evenus, Lysicles, the youth
Of Cyparissus, and Cratander's age,
Distinguish'd each by office, wealth, or birth, 65

Or martial actions. Beasts of chace and prey,
The wolf and boar, the lion and the stag,
Within close toils imprison'd, thus become
The hunter's mark. The signal of retreat
Is now uplifted by the hopeless chiefs ; 70

When, as a friendly gale with stiff'ning wings
Repels a vessel, driving by the force
Of boist'rous currents in a fatal track
To bulge on rocks, a voluntary band
Of men at arms, and bowmen, Attic all, 75
Restrain the flight of Megara. Expert
Their shafts they level at the Persian steeds,

Not at the riders. Soon around the plain
Th' ungovern'd animals disperse, enrag'd.
By galling wounds. Olympiodorus, chief 80

Among

Among the light auxiliars, on the lifts
 Of Pisa just Hellanodics had crown'd,
 The first of Greeks in archery. He stands
 Like Telamonian Teucer on the mound
 Of Atreus' son, where fate's unerring hand 85
 Had strung the bow which heap'd with Phrygian
 dead

Th' empurpled fosse, while Ajax fwung abroad
 The sev'n-fold shield to guard a brother's skill.
 Still in the field Masistius, who observ'd
 The active archer, from his lofty seat 90
 Against him whirls a javelin. Cimon near
 Receives the blunted weapon on the bos
 Of his huge buckler. His vindictive bow
 Olympiodorus bends ; the rapid shaft
 Full in the forehead of the gen'rous steed 95
 He lodges deep. The high Nisæan blood
 Boils in its channels through tormenting pain ;
 Erect the courser paws in air, and hurls

Book XXIV. THE ATHENAID. 93

In writhing agitation from his back
Th' illustrious rider on the plain supine. 100
Against him rush th' Athenians; on his feet
They find him brandishing his sabre keen,
With his firm shield a bulwark to his breast,
Like one of those earth-sprung in radiant arms,
Whom the Cadmēan dragon's fruitful jaws 105
Or Colchian serpent's teeth produc'd. Affail'd
On ev'ry side, his fortitude augments
With danger. Down to Pluto's realm he sends
Iphicrates and Eurytus, who drank
Callirhoe's fountain; Amynander born 110
On smooth Ilissus, and three gallant youths
Of Marathon. His cuirass strong withstands
Repeated blows; unwounded, but o'ercome
By unremitted labour, on his knees,
Like some proud structure half o'erthrown by time, 95
He sinks at last. Brave Cimon hastes to save 116
A foe so noble in his deeds, in port

Beyond

94 THE ATHENAID. Book XXIV.

Beyond a mortal ; when a vulgar fword
 That moment through the vizor of his helm
 Transfix'd the brain, so exquisitely form'd, 120
 The seat of purest sentiment and thought.
 His frame, in ruin beauteous still and great,
 The fatal stroke laid low. An earthquake thus
 Shook from his base that wonder of the world,
 The Colossean deity of Rhodes. 125

Of danger all unheeding, by his lord
 Statirus kneel'd, and o'er his bosom spread
 His palms in anguish. Timely to protect
 The gentle youth ingenuous Cimon came,
 While thus the gasping satrap breath'd his last : 130

Farewell, thou faithful—Bid Mardonius think
 How brief are life's enjoyments—Virtue lives
 Through all eternity—By virtue earn'd,
 Praise too is long—Melissa—grant me thine.

Book XXIV. THE ATHENAID. 95

In death, resembling sweetest sleep, his eyes 135
Serenely drop their curtains, and the soul
Flies to th' eternal mansions of the just.

Within the trenches Cimon straight commands
To lodge the corse; when lo! another cloud
Of Eastern squadrons, Mindarus their chief, 140
Who, o'er the stream detach'd with numbers new,
Not finding great Masistius, rous'd afresh
The storm of onset. Dreadful was the shock
Of these, attempting to redeem, of those,
Who held the body; but the Attic spears 145
Break in the chests of fiery steeds, which press
With violence unyielding, and the ranks
In front disarm. The archers have discharg'd
Their quivers. Now had Mindarus acquir'd
Undying glory, and the Greeks resign'd 150
The long-contested prize, when threat'ning shouts,
Of diff'rent Grecians, pouring from the camp,
Alarm the eastern chief. Cleander here

With

96 THE ATHENAI'D. Book XXIV.

With all Trœzenè, Arimnestus there,

Diomedon's bold successor in arms,

155

With his Platæans, and the Thespian brave,

Alcimedon, assail the Persian flanks.

So two hoarse torrents opposite descend

From hills, where recent thunder-storms have burst;

In the mid-vale the dashing waters meet

160

To overwhelm the peasant's hopes and toil.

Myronides and Æschylus in fight,

Each with his formidable phalanx moves;

Th' encampment whole is arming. From the fight

His mangled cavalry the Persian calls.

165

In eager quest of refuge in their lines

Beyond Asopus, through surrounding foes

The coursers vault like swimmers, who forsake

A found'ring vessel, and with buoyant strength

Bound through the surge for safety on the beach.

Triumphant in their camp the Greeks replace 171
Their standards; thither Cimon's gen'rous care

Transports

Book XXIV. THE ATHENAI'D. 97

Transports Mafistius. Eager to behold
A prize so noble, curious throngs on throngs
Press in disorder; each his station leaves; 175

Confusion reigns. The gen'ral host to arms
Pausanias sternly vigilant commands,
And next provides a chariot to display,
Throughout th' extensive lines, th' illustrious dead,
In magnitude and beauty late the pride 180

Of nature's study'd workmanship. His limbs
The hand of Cimon tenderly compos'd,
As would a brother to a brother's corse.

Mafistius fill'd the chariot; on his knees
Statirus held, and water'd with his tears 185
The face majestic, not by death deform'd,
Pale, but with features mild, which still retain'd
Attractive sweetness to endear the sight.

First on the right through Lacedæmon's range
The spectacle is carried; silence there 190

98 THE ATHENAI.D. Book XXIV.

Prevails ; the Spartan citizen no sign
Of triumph shews, subordinate to law,
Which disciplin'd his passions. Tow'rds the left,
Through exultation loud of other Greeks,
The awful car at length to Attic ranks 195
Brings their own prize, by Aristides met ;
There silence too, in rev'rence of their chief,
Is universal. He prepares to speak ;
But first the mighty reliques he surveys.
He feels like Jove, contemplating the pure, 200
The gen'rous, brave Sarpedon, as he lay
In death's cold arms, when swift th' almighty fire
Decreed that Morpheus, gentlest of the gods,
Should waft to Lycia's realm the royal clay,
From pious friends and subjects to obtain 205
The rites of splendid sepulture. Complete
Was now the solemn pause ; to lift'ning ears
Thus Aristides vents his godlike soul :

Here

Book XXIV. THE ATHENAID. 99

Here close your triumph, Grecians, nor provoke
The jealous pow'rs who mark for chosen wrath
O'er-weening pride. Though auguring success 211
From this great satrap's fall, revere his clay ;
Such rev'rence all of mortal mold will need,
All soon, or late. If comeliness and strength,
If gracious manners, and a mind humane, 215
If worth and wisdom could avoid the grave,
You had not seen this tow'r of Asia fall.
Yet there is left attainable by man,
What may survive the grave ; it is the fame
Of gen'rous actions ; this do you attain. 220
I in Psittalia's isle this Persian knew
Brave Medon's prize ; his captive hands we freed ;
To him our hospitable faith we pledg'd,
Through whom Phœbean Timon was redeem'd,
With Haliartus, on Eubœa's fields 225
To signalize their swords. On Oeta's hill
In him the daughter of Oileus found

100 THE ATHENIAD. Book XXIV.

A spotless guardian. Let his corse and arms,
Thy acquisition, Cimon, be resign'd
To piety; a herald shall attend 230
Thy steps; remove him to his native friends.
Let Xerxes hear, let fierce Mardonius see,
How much Barbarians differ from the Greeks.

Minerva's tribes, approving, hear the words
Of clemency and pity. Cimon mounts 235
The fun'ral car; attentive and compos'd
Like Maia's son, commission'd from the skies
By his eternal fire, the warrior hears
The full instructions of his patron chief.
Th' Asopian stream he fords to Asia's tents, 240
Whence issue wailing multitudes, who rend
The air with ejulation, while the wheels
Before Mardonius stop their solemn roll.
He rives his mantle, and defiles with dust
His splendid head. Not more the destin'd king

Of

Book XXIV. THE ATHENAID. 101

Of Judah mourn'd the virtuous heir of Saul, 246
Mow'd down in battle by Philistian strength
On Gilboa's heights; nor melted more in grief
O'er Absalom's fair locks, too much endear'd
To blind parental fondness. From the car 250
Descending, Cimon spake: Lo! Persian chief,
The just Athenian, Aristides, sends
These reliques, which he honours, to partake
Of sepulture, as eastern rites ordain.

Then art thou fall'n, too confident, exclaims 255
Mardonius, too unmindful of my love,
And anxious warnings! Mithra, veil thy face
In clouds! In tears of blood, thou sky, dissolve!
Earth groan, and gen'ral nature join in woe!
The tallest cedar of the orient groves 260
Lies prostrate—Destiny malign! I brave
Thy further malice—Blasted to the root
Is all my joy. Here sorrow clos'd his lips.

102 THE ATHENAID. Book XXIV.

As frozen dead by wintry gusts he stood,
 Devoid of motion; Mindarus was nigh, 265
 Whose interposing prudence thus was heard:

O chief of nations numberless! who stand
 Spectators round, and watch thy lightest look,
 Confine thy anguish; in their sight revere
 Thyself; regard this messenger benign 270
 From Aristides, and thy native sense
 Of obligation rouse. Mardonius then,
 As from a trance: I hear thee, and approve,
 My gentle kinsman. This returning car,
 With purest gold, and costly vesture pil'd, 275
 Shall bear the copious tribute of my thanks
 To Aristides; whom extoll'd to heav'n
 By excellent Masistius oft my soul
 Hath heard, the righteous by the righteous prais'd.

Now Cimon interpos'd: That man extoll'd 280
 Thou dost not, Persian, lib'ral as thou art,

Mean

Mean to offend ; thy presents then with-hold.

In poverty more glorious, than in wealth

The wealthiest, Aristides frowns at gold.

No costly vestures decorate his frame,

285

Itself divine ; the very arms he wears,

The sole possession of that spotless man,

All ornament reject ; he only boasts

The sharpest sword, the weightiest spear and shield.

Ha ! must I pass unthankful in the fight

290

Of one, Mardonius lov'd, the chief reply'd ?

No, answer'd quick th' Athenian ; from his cross.

Take down Leonidas. A stedfast look

Mardonius fix'd on Cimon : That request,

O Greek ! is big with danger to my head,

295

Which I will hazard, since the only price

Set on the precious reliques thou restor'st.

This said, he orders to his tent the corse ;
There on the clay-cold bosom of his friend
Thus plaintive hangs : Fall'n pillar of my hopes,
What is Mardonius, wanting thy support ! 301
Thou arm of strength, for ever are unbrac'd
Thy nerves ! Enlighten'd mind, where prudence
dwelt,
Heart purify'd by honour, you have left
Mardonius helpless ; left him to himself, 305
To his own passions, which thy counsel tam'd !
The dang'rous paths of error I shall tread
Without thy guidance ! Shame, defeat and death,
Frown in thy wounds ill-boding—yet thy look
Not fate itself of gentleness deprives. 310
By heaven a world shall mourn thee—Loud he calls ;
Which Mindarus obeys. To him the chief:

Thou too didst love Masistius—Fly, proclaim
A gen'ral lamentation through the camp ;

Let

Book XXIV. THE ATHENAID. 105

Let all Bœotia sound Masistius lost. 315

O verify'd too clearly, boding dream
Of mine, by him so fatally despis'd!

See ev'ry head dismantled of its hair,

The soldiers, women, eunuchs; of his mane

See ev'ry steed, the mule and camel shorn. 320

O that the echo of our grief might pass

The Hellespont to Asia! that her loss

Through all her cities, through her vales, and streams,

Beyond the banks of Ganges might be told!

As Mindarus departs, the Theban chief 325

Approaches, Leontiades, who spake:

If there be one, O gen'ral, can replace

Masistius wife, that prodigy is found,

Elæan Hegesistratus, of seers

The most renown'd. His penetrating mind 330

Can from the victim slain, or mystic flight

Of birds, foresee the dark events of time;
 Invet'rate foe to Sparta, sore with wrongs,
 He comes thy servant. Opportune he comes,

Replies Mardonius. In the rites of Greece 335

Ten hecatombs, before the sun descends,
 Shall to Masistius bleed an off'rинг high.

I will engage this augur at a price
 Beyond his wishes; let his skill decide,
 When to give battle, and avenge my friend. 340

Collect your Grecian artists; instant build
 A cenotaph in your Dircæan grove,
 Where that pure fountain trills a mournful note.

There shall Masistius in his name survive
 Among the Greeks; his last remains, embalm'd,
 Among his fathers shall in Susa rest. 346

The Theban goes. Statirus next appears;

Th' afflicted hero greets the weeping youth:

Ah!

Ah! poor Statirus! thou hast lost thy lord,
 I lost my friend, her bulwark Asia lost. 350
 The sacred clay to Artamanes bear,
 Left in Trachiniæ chief. His pious love
 (Who did not love Mafistius) will convey
 To distant Sestos his embalm'd remains,
 Thence o'er the narrow Hellespont, to reach 355
 His native Asia, and his father's tomb.
 How did he fall, Statirus? Did he send
 To me no counsel from his dying lips?

These, in a sigh the faithful page began,
 Were his last accents. “ Let Mardonius think
 “ How brief are life's enjoyments. Virtue lives 361
 “ Through all eternity. By virtue earn'd
 “ Praise too is long—Melissa, grant me thine”.

Commend me to Melissa, starting, spake
 The son of Gobryas. From the shameful cross

Bid Artamanes in her presence free 366

Leonidas the Spartan. Now perform

Another act of duty to thy lord;

Despoil my head of all its curling pride;

Slight sacrifice to grief—but ev'ry limb, 370

Loft from this body, and its mangled flesh

Shall in the dust be scatter'd, ere I quit

My chace of great revenge. Concluding here,

He strides impetuous like a stately ram,

Lord of the flock new-shorn. His giant guard 375

Inclose him round; th' innumerable host

Attend him, all divested of their hair,

In howling anguish to an altar huge,

By hasty hands constructed. Deep the earth

Around is hollow'd, deep is drench'd with blood.

Ten hundred fable victims heap the ground. 381

Now gen'ral silence reigns, as o'er the main

In winter, when Halcyonè laments

Her

Book XXIV. THE ATHENAID. 109

Her Ceyx lost, and Æolus, her fire ;
By pity soften'd, all the air is calm, 385
While she sits brooding on her watry nest.

Amidst a cloud of frankincense the priest

Of Elis, Hegeſistratus, performs

The rites of divination; awful thus

At length unfolds the mysteries of time: 390

Hear, all ye nations; great Mardonius, hear;
Th' Asopian channel is the line of fate;
The host, which passes, falls; success will crown
Th' affai'l'd; th' affailant is to slaughter doom'd.

The multitude, discourag'd by the death 395
Of their belov'd Mafistius, hear in joy;
Not so Mardonius at revenge delay'd.
Inaction aggravates his pain; his tent
Receives him. Solitary there, like night
Within her cavern, thus he feeds his grief: 400

“ Ambition

110 THE ATHENAID. Book XXIV.

" Ambition curb; let virtue be thy pride."

So spake Masiſtius, when we parted laſt
 To meet no more—I feel ambition cold,
 Benumb'd by sorrow—" Let Mardonius think,
 " How brief are life's enjoyments ;" so thy fate, 405
 Dear friend, evinces—Life itſelf is ſhort;
 Its joys are shorter; yet the scanty ſpan
 Adverſity can lengthen, till we loathe.
 If, on the brilliant throne of Xerxes plac'd,
 I held the orient and Hesperian worlds 410
 My vassals, could the millions in my hoſt
 Compel the adamantine gate of death
 To render back my friend ? O tortur'd heart !
 Which burn'ſt with friendſhip, of thy gen'rous flame
 Th' inestimable object is no more. 415
 What then is greatness ? What th' imperial robe,
 The diadem and ſcepter ? Could you fill
 The void, his endless absence hath produc'd
 In my ſad boſom ? Were ye mine how vain

The

Book XXIV. THE ATHENAID. 111

The acquisition, which my grief would loathe, 420

And, wak'd by grief, let honour timely shun,

Left from his grave Mafistius should arise

To shake my pillow with his nightly curse.

Not hecatombs on hecatombs of bulls

Heap'd on his manes, not the votive hair, 425

Nor fun'ral moan of nations could avail

To moderate his ire; nor all the pow'r

Of empires join'd to empires guard my sleep.

At length he sinks in slumber, not compos'd,
But wanders restless through the wild of dreams.

End of the Twenty-fourth Book.

THE

ATHENAI D.

BOOK the TWENTY-FIFTH.

ERE thus each augur in the diff'rent camps
 Unmann'd the soldier by religious dread,
 Eubœa's coast Sicinus had regain'd.
 That peopled island's force of ships and arms
 Themistocles had muster'd. Oreus held 5
 The ready chief, expecting weighty news
 From Aristides, which Sicinus swift
 Imparts. To him Themistocles: My friend,
 I ask no more; the assembled host of Greece
 Hath fix'd Mardonius on th' Asopian verge; 10

A hasty

Book XXV. THE ATHENAID. 113

A hasty conflict Aristides shuns ;
Then shall the blow, I meditate, be struck,
Ere thy reverted passage can transmit
To him my greetings. Stay and see my oars
For infamous Thessalia dash the waves ; 15
Her Aleuadian race of tyrants foul,
Friends to Barbarians, traitors to the Greeks,
Shall feel my scourge. Her plenty I will bar
Against Mardonius ; famine shall invade
His tents, and force him to unequal fight. 20

He gives command ; the signal is uprear'd
For embarkation. All Eubœa pours
Her sons aboard, and loads the groaning decks.
From his Cleora Hyacinthus parts,
Brave Haliartus from his new-espous'd 25
Acanthè. Lo ! each female seeks the beach,
Spectatress eager of th' alluring man,
Whose artful eye could summon ev'ry grace

To

To fascinate both sexes, and his wiles
Arm with enchantment. Beauteous and august 30
Like Cybelè, prime goddefs, tufret-crown'd,
Source of th' ethereal race, his consort lifts
Above the rest her countenance sublime.

By her own offspring, and the pledges dear
Of Aristides, which her hand receiv'd 35
At Salamis, and cherish'd like her own,
She stands encircled, her embarking lord
Accosting thus: Unfavourable winds,
Or fortune's frown I fear not. All the gods
Of earth and ocean, who delighted view 40
The virtuous brave, contending for their laws
With lawless tyrants, will combine to bles
Themistocles and Aristides link'd
In harmony of counsels. See, dear lord,
His and thy children interweave their hands; 45
Thy sure success I augur from their smiles.

I from

I from Timothea's, gallantly replies
 The parting chief. This union is thy work;
 Thine be the praise from thankful Greece preserv'd.

He said, and lightly to his vessel pass'd; 50
 While ev'ry sail was op'ning to the wind.

Eubœa, where she fronts the Malian shore,
 Beneath a promontory's quiet lee
 Protects the fleet benighted. Here the son
 Of Neocles aboard his galley calls 55
 His pupil Hyacinthus, whom he thus
 Instructs: Young hero, since Cleora's love
 Could not detain thee from the lists of fame,
 Fame thou shalt win. Thessalia's nearest bounds
 I from Spercheos in Trachiniæ's bay 60
 Mean to invade. Nicanor and thyself
 With your Carystian force, Nearchus brave
 With his Chalcidians, must a distant course

To

116 THE ATHENAIID. Book XXV.

To Potidæa take, whose valiant race
 The winter siege of great Masistius foil'd. 65
 Forewarn'd by due intelligence from me,
 They will augment your numbers. Through the
 mouth
 Of fam'd Enipeus Potidæan zeal
 Will guide your helms to rich Larissa's walls,
 Thessalia's helpless capital, whose youth 70
 Attend Mardonius. Land, and burn th' abode
 Of Aleuadian Thorax, who conducts
 The foe through Greece. O'er all the region spread;
 Where'er thou seest an Aleuadian roof,
 The residence of traitors hurl to earth; 75
 The flocks and herds from ev'ry pasture sweep,
 From ev'ry store th' accumulated grain,
 Support of Asia's myriads. O! recall
 Thy late achievements on the bloody fields
 Of Chalcis, and of Oreus. They, who brav'd 80
 Thy native coast, of Demonax the friends,

Now

Now in their own Thessalia lie thy spoil ;
On their wide ruins build thee trophies new.

Commission'd thus, the animated youth
With each Carystian, each Chalcidic prow, 85
By morning sails. Three days the Attic chief,
Skreen'd in a harbour nigh Cenæum's point,
Refts on his anchors. So, by thickets hid
In fell Hyrcania, nurse of rav'ous broods,
The tiger lurks, and meditates unseen 90
A sudden sally on his heedless prey.

The fourth gay dawn with fresh'ning breezes
curls
The Malian waters. In Barbaric flags
The wily chief apparelling his masts
Fallacious, ere the horizontal sun 95
Couch'd on the ocean, fills with hostile prows
The wide Sperchean mouth. Along the vales
Innumerable

118 THE ATHENAI'D. Book XXV.

Innumerable carriages display
The plenty huge for Asia's camp amass'd.
Th' encircling mountains all their echoes blend 100
In one continu'd sound with bleating flocks,
With bellowing herds, and dissonant uproar
Of their conductors; whom Thessalia sent,
Whom all the extent of Thracia, and the realm
Of Amarantha's lord. Th' affrighted hinds 105
Desert their charge. Trachiniæ's neighb'ring gates
With fugitives are throng'd. Lo! Cleon plants
His bold Eretrian banners on the strand;
The Styrians form; Eudemus bounds ashore,
Geræstians follow; then auxiliars new, 110
The subjects late of Demonax; the troops
Of Locrian Medon, Delphian Timon land,
Themistocles the last; whose chosen guard
Of fifty Attic, fifty Spartan youths,
Still sedulous and faithful close the rear. 115

They

They reach'd in order'd march Trachinian walls,

Whose gates unclos'd. Majestical advanc'd

A form rever'd by universal Greece,

Prais'd by each tongue, by ev'ry eye admir'd,

The Oilean priestess of th' immortal Nine, 120

The goddess-like Melissa. Medon swift,

With Haliartus, met her sacred step.

Her name divulg'd from ev'ry station call'd

The gazing chiefs, Themistocles the first;

Whom, by her brother pointed out to view, 125

She thus address'd: Themistocles, give ear,

And thou, O Medon, whom, a stranger long

To my desiring eyes, they see restor'd.

Well may you wonder, that a hostile fort

Melissa's hand delivers to your pow'r. 130

There is a Persian worthy to be rank'd

Among the first of Grecians. Just, humane,

Thy captive, Medon, amply hath discharg'd

His price of ransom. Nine revolving moons

*

Beheld

Beheld Mafistius guardian of my hill

135

In purity of rev'rence to my fane,

My person, my dependents. I forsook

At Amarantha's suit my old abode;

A virtuous princess from a sickly couch

My care hath rais'd, Sandaucè, in those walls 140

Long resident with me. Two days are past

Since Artamanes, governing these tracts,

Heard of a navy on Theffalia's coast,

And with his force, though slender, took the field

To guard Larissa. Your descent unmans 145

The few remaining Persians in the fort;

All with Sandaucè and her children flew

To my protection; mercy to obtain

Became my charge; her terrors will disperse,

Soon as she knows, Themistocles is nigh. 150

The army halts. Trachiniæ's gates admit

Cecropia's hero, Medon, and the son

Of

Book XXV. THE ATHENAID. 121

Of Lygdamis. Sandaucè they approach,
Sandaucè late in convalescent charms
Fresh, as a May-blown rose, by pallid fear 155
Now languid, as a lily beat with rain,
Till she discovers with transported looks
Her Salaminian guardian; then the warmth
Of gratitude, redoubling all her bloom,
Before him throws her prostrate. To him ran 160
The recollecting children, who embrace
Their benefactor's knees. She thus unfolds
Her lips, whose tuneful exclamation charms:

O, my protector—Interposing swift,
His ready hand uplifts her from the ground. 165

Do not disgrace me, thou excelling fair,
He said; to leave such beauty thus deprest'd
Would derogate from manhood. She replies:

Forbear to think my present captive lot
 Hath humbled thus Sandaucè. No, the weight 170
 Of obligation past, my rescu'd babes
 In Salamis, myself from horror fav'd,
 Have bent my thankful knee. No fears debase
 My bosom now; Themistocles I see,
 In him a known preserver. Melting by, 175
 Melissa, Medon, Haliartus, shed
 The tend'rest dews of sympathy. In look
 Compassionate, but calm, the chief rejoins:

Suggest thy wishes, princess, and command
 My full compliance. She these accents sighs:

Ye gen'rous men, what pity is not due 181
 To eastern women! Prize, ye Grecian dames,
 Your envy'd state. When your intrepid lords
 In arms contend with danger on the plain,
 You in domestic peace are left behind 185

Among

Among your letter'd progeny, to form
Their ductile minds, and exercise your skill
In arts of elegance and use. Alas !
Our wretched race, in ignorance and sloth
By Asia nurtur'd, like a captive train, 190
In wheeling dungeons with our infants clos'd,
Must wait th' event of some tremendous hour,
Which, unpropitious, leaves us on the field
A spoil of war. What myriads of my sex
From Greece to distant Hellespont bestrew 195
The ways, and whiten with their bleaching bones
The Thracian wilds ! Spercheos views the tomb
Of Ariana, hapless sister, laid
In foreign mold ! My portion of distress
You know, benignant guardians, who affwag'd 200
My suff'rings. Then to quit the direful scene,
Revisiting my native soil, to rest
Among my children, and instruct their youth,
As kind Melissa hath instructed mine,

Were sure no wish immoderate or vague. 205

But Artamanes—Blushing, trembling, here

She paus'd. Melissa takes the word: Sweet friend,

Let vice, not virtue blush. Cecropian chief,

Her soft attention well that youth deserves,

She all his constancy and care. Their hands 210

Are pledg'd; th' assent of Asia's king alone

Is wanting, which Mardonius hath assur'd

To Artamanes, flow'r of Asia's peers.

Him, with unequal force, to battle march'd

Against thy ranks, which never have been foil'd,

She knows, and trembles. Artfully replies 216

Themistocles: Sandaucè may prevent

This danger. Let her messenger convey

A kind injunction, that the noble youth,

Whose merit I have treasur'd in my breast, 220

May sheath his fruitless weapons, and, return'd

To her, aboard my well-appointed keel

With her embarking, seek their native soil.

The

Book XXV. THE ATHENAID. 125

The princess hears, and joyfully provides
A messenger of trust. Assembling now 225
His captains, thus Themistocles ordains :

Friends of Eubœa, soon as Phœbus dawns
Your progres bend to Larissæan tow'rs ;
Your chief is Cleon. Hyacinthus join ;
To your united force the foe must yield. 230
Save Artamanes ; bring him captive back,
But not with less humanity than care.
Accomplish'd Medon, Haliartus, vers'd
In Oeta's neighb'ring wilds, your Locrians plant
Among the passes ; once secur'd, they leave 235
Us at our leisure to contrive and act.
Thee, honour'd seer of Delphi, at my side
In this Trachinian station I retain.

By op'ning day each leader on his charge
Proceeds. Themistocles inspects the vale, 240

Constrains the peasants from unnumber'd cars
Aboard his fleet to lade the golden grain.

Before Thermopylæ the Locrian files
Appear. From Oeta's topmost peak, behold,
O'er Medon's head a vulture wings his flight, 245
Whom to a cross beside the public way
Th' Oilean hero's curious eye pursues.

Oh ! stay thy rav'nous beak, in anguish loud
Cries Haliartus. Shudder while thou hear'st,
Son of Cneus ; on that hideous pile 250
The bones of great Leonidas are hung.

Then Medon's cool, delib'rate mind was shook
By agitation to his nature strange.
His spear and buckler to the ground he hurl'd ;
Before th' illustrious ruins on his knee 255
He sunk, and thus in agony exclaim'd :

Should

Should this flagitious profanation pass
 Unpunish'd still, th' existence of the gods
 Were but a dream. O, long-enduring Jove !
 Thy own Herculean offspring canst thou see 260
 Defac'd by vultures, and the parching wind,
 Yet wield resistless thunder—But thy ways
 Are awfully mysterious ; to arraign
 Thy heaviest doom is blasphemy. Thy will
 For me reserv'd the merit to redeem 265
 These precious reliques ; penitent I own
 My rashness ; thankful I accept the task,

O mighty spirit ! who didst late inform
 With ev'ry virtue that disfigur'd frame,
 With ev'ry kind affection prov'd by me, 270
 The last distinguish'd object of thy care,
 When it forbad me to partake thy fate,
 The life, thy friendship sav'd, I here devote
 To vindicate thy manes. Not the wrongs

Of gen'ral Greece, not Locris giv'n to flames, 275
 Not the subversion of my father's house,
 E'er with such keen resentment stung my heart,
 As this indignity to thee. He said,
 And, with the aid of Haliartus, free'd
 The sacred bones; Leonteus, and the prime 280
 Of Locris, frame with substituted shields
 Th' extemporeanous bier. Again the chief:

Leonteus, Haliartus, rest behind;
 Achieve th' important service, which the son
 Of Neocles enjoins. The pious charge 285
 Be mine of rend'ring to Melissa's care
 These honour'd reliques. Now in measur'd pace
 The warlike bearers tread; their manly breasts
 Not long withhold the tribute of their sighs
 Ingenuous; tears accompany their steps. 290
 His sister in Trachiniæ Medon soon
 Approaches; glad she hears him, and replies.

Hail!

Book XXV. THE ATHENAID. 129

Hail ! brother, hail ! thou chosen by the gods
From longer shame to rescue these remains,
Which once contain'd whate'er is good and great:
Among the sons of men. Majestic shade ! 296
By unrelenting laws of Dis forbid
To enter, where thy ancestors reside ;
Who, seed of Jove, to their Elysian joys
Expect thee, most illustrious of the race. 300
Amidst thy wand'rings on the banks of Styx,
Dost thou recall Melissa's dirge of praise
O'er thee, preparing by a glorious death
To save thy country ? O ! unbury'd still,
Did not Melissa promise to thy dust 305
Peace in her temple ? An atrocious king
Hath barr'd awhile th' accomplishment ; thy friend,
Thy soldier, now will ratify my word.
Soon to Lycurgus shall thy spirit pass,
To Orpheus, Homer, and th' Ascræan sage, 310
Who shall contend to praise thee in their bow'rs

130 THE ATHENAI'D. Book XXV.

Of amaranth and myrtle, ever young
 Like thy renown. In Oeta's fane these bones,
 Dear to the Muses, shall repose, till Greece,
 Amid her future triumphs, hath decreed 515
 A tomb and temple to her saviour's fame.

This high oblation of pathetic praise,
 Paid by her holy friend, Sandaucè notes
 Attentive; seldom from Melissa's eye
 Was she remote. Her eunuchs she deputes 320
 To bring a coffer large of od'rous wood
 Inlaid with pearl, repository due
 To such divine remains. In time appears
 Th' Athenian gen'ral to applaud the deed,
 While thus the mighty manes he invokes: 325

Hear, thou preserver of thy country, hear!
 Lo! in his palms of Salamis the son
 Of Neocles salutes thee. From a hand,

Which

Book XXV. THE ATHENAIID. 131

Which hath already half aveng'd thy death,
Accept of decent rites. Thy virtue sav'd 330
A nation ; they hereafter shall complete
Thy fun'ral honours, and surround thy tomb
With trophies equal to thy deathless name.

He ceas'd. Her mantle on the solemn scene
Night from her car in dusky folds outspread. 335

Three mornings pass. Anon Sperchœan banks
Re-echo shouts of triumph, while the vales
Are clad in arms. Lo ! Cleon is return'd,
Uplifting bloodless ensigns of success,
And thus accosts Themistocles : Thy prize, 340
This Persian lord receive ; our hasty march
O'ertook his rear. From Larissœan tow'rs,
A recent conquest, Hyacinthus, join'd
By Potidœans, and Olynthian spears,
Was then in sight. The herald I detach'd 345

With

With fair Sandaucè's message, and thy terms
Of peace and safety; Artamanes found
Resistance vain, and yielded. From the van
Now stepp'd the Persian graceful, and bespeak
Themistocles: Accept a second time 350
Thy captive, gen'rous Grecian; nor impute
To want of prowess, or to fond excess
Of acquiescence to Sandaucè's will,
My unreserv'd surrender. To have stain'd
By fruitless contest thy triumphant wreaths 355
With blood, and spurn'd the bounty of thy hand,
Had prov'd ingratitude in me. These words
Cecropia's chief return'd: Receive my hand,
Thy pledge of freedom here not less secure,
Than heretofore at Salamis, thy pledge 360
Of bliss yet more endearing. Soon my keel
Shall place thee happy on thy native coast,
Thee and thy princess; that in future days

You

Book XXV. THE ATHENAID. 133

You may at least of all the Asian breed
Report my kindness, and forget my sword. 365

Amidst his words a soft complaining trill
Of Philomela interrupts their sound.
The youthful satrap then : That pensive bird,
Sandaucè's warbling summoner, is wont
In evening shade on Ariana's tomb 370
To sit and sing ; my princess there devotes
In melancholy solitude this hour
To meditation, which dissolves in tears.

Then greet her, said th' Athenian ; thy return
Will sooth her tender breast. My promise add, 375
That on the first fair whisper of the winds,
She shall revisit her maternal soil.

This said, they parted. At her sister's grave
The satrap join'd his princess. He began :

I have

I have obey'd thy summons. No disgrace 380
 Was my surrender to the conqu'ring sword,
 Which Persia long hath felt. Thy servant comes
 No more a captive, but to thee by choice ;
 Themistocles all bounteous and humane,
 As heretofore, I find. Forbear to check 385
 That rising birth of smiles ; in perfect light
 Those half-illuminated eyes attire ;
 Enough the tribute of their tears hath lav'd
 These precious tombs. Prepare thee to embark ;
 Themistocles hath promis'd thou shalt leave 390
 A land, whose soaring genius hath depress'd
 The languid plumes of Asia. Lift thy head
 In pleasing hope to clasp thy mother's knees,
 To change thy weeds of mourning, and receive
 A royal brother's gift, this faithful hand. 395

Nigh Ariana's clay Autarctus slept.
 Divine Sandaucè on her husband's tomb,

With

Book XXV. THE ATHENAID. 135

With marble pomp constructed by the care
Of Artamanes, fix'd a pensive look
In silence. Sudden from the cluster'd shrubs, 400
O'erhanging round it, tuneful all and blithe
A flight of feather'd warblers, which abound
Through each Thessalian vale, in carrol sweet
Perch on the awful monument. The sun
Streaks with a parting, but unsully'd ray 405
Their lively change of plumage, and each rill
Is soften'd by their melody. Accept,
Accept this omen, Artamanes cries ;
Autarctus favours, Horomazes smiles,
Whose choir of songsters not unprompted seem
Our nuptial hymn preluding. She replies : 411

I want no omen to confirm thy truth.
Dust of my sister, of my lord, farewell ;
Secure in Grecian piety remain.
Still in his offspring will Sandaucè love 415
That

That husband, thou, my Artamanes, still
Revere that friend. She said, and dropp'd her hand,
Press'd by the youth. With purity their guide,
They o'er the mead Sperchēan slowly seek
Trachinian portals. Phœbe on their heads 420
Lets fall a spotless canopy of light.

End of the Twenty-fifth Book.

THE

ATHENIAD.

BOOK the TWENTY-SIXTH.

FROM her Tithonian couch Aurora mounts
 The sky. In rev'rence now of Sparta's name,
 Yet more of dead Leonidas, three days
 To preparation for his burial rites
 Themistocles decrees. To curious search 5
 Innumerable herds and flocks supply
 Selected victims. Of their hairy pines
 To frame the stately pyre the hills are shorn.
 Amid this labour Hyacinthus, rich
 In Aleuadian spoil, his colleague brave 10

Nicanor,

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Nicanor, all the Potidæan bands,
Th' Olynthians, and Nearchus, who conducts
The youth of Chalcis, reinforce the camp
With their victorious ranks. Th' appointed day
Was then arriv'd. A broad constructed pyre 15
Tow'rs in the center of Trachiniæ's plain ;
The diff'rent standards of the Grecian host
Are planted round. The Attic chief convenes
The fifty Spartans of his guard, and thus :

Themistocles, distinguish'd by your state, 20
By your assiduous courage long sustain'd,
Will now repay these benefits. Your king,
Leonidas, the brightest star of Greece,
No more shall wander in the gloom of Styx ;
But that last passage to immortal seats 25
Through me obtain. Greek institutes require
The nearest kindred on the fun'r'al stage
The dead to lay, the victims to dispose,

To

To pour libations, and the sacred dust
Inurn. Alone of these assembled Greeks 30
Are you the hero's countrymen; alone
Your hands the pious office shall discharge.

Th' obedient Spartans from Trachiniæ's gates
Produce to view the venerable bones
Herculean. Lifted up the structure high 35
Of pines and cedars, on the surface large
All, which of great Leonidas remains,
By sedulous devotion is compos'd.
'The various captains follow, some in gaze
Of wonder, others weeping. Last appears 40
Melpomene, trailing her pontific pall
(Calliopè in semblance) with her troop
Of snowy-vested nymphs from Oeta's hill,
With all her vassals, decently arrang'd
By Mycon's care. Two hecatombs are slain, 45
Of sheep five hundred, and libations pour'd

Of

Of richest wine. A Spartan now applies
The ruddy firebrand. In his priestly robe
Phœbean Timon supplicates a breeze
From Æolus to raise the creeping flame. 50
Thrice round the crackling heaps the silent host,
With shields revers'd, and spears inclining low,
Their solemn movement wind. The shrinking pyre
Now glows in embers; fresh libations damp
The heat. A vase of silver high-emboſſ'd, 55
By Hyacinthus from Larissa brought,
Spoil of th' abode which treach'rous Thorax held,
Receives the sacred ashes, and is plac'd
Before Melissa. So the godlike son
Of Neocles directs. An awful sign 60
From her commands attention; thus she spake:

Thou art not dead, Leonidas; thy mind
In ev'ry Grecian lives. Thy mortal part,
Transform'd to ashes, shall on Oeta's hill

Among

Book XXVI. THE ATHENAID. 141

Among the celebrating Muses dwell 65
In glory; while through animated Greece
Thy virtue's inextinguishable fires
Propitious beam, and, like the flames of Jove,
Intimidate her foes. Not wine, nor oil,
Nor blood of hecatombs, profusely spilt, 70
Can to thy manes pay the tribute due;
The massacre of nations, all the spoil
Of humbled Asia, Destiny hath mark'd
For consecration of thy future tomb.
Two ministers my soul prophetic sees, 75
Themistocles and Aristides stand
Presiding o'er the sacrifice. The earth,
The sea, shall witness to the mighty rites.
Cease to regret the transitory doom
Of thy remains insulted, no disgrace 80
To thee, but Xerxes. Pass, exalted shade,
The bounds of Dis, nor longer wail thy term
Of wand'ring now elaps'd; all measur'd time

Is

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Is nothing to eternity. Assume
 Among the bles'd thy everlasting seat. 85
 Th' indignity, thy earthly frame endur'd,
 Perhaps the gods permitted in their love
 'To fill the measure of celestial wrath
 Against thy country's foes; then rest in peace,
 Thou twice illustrious victim to her weal. 90

As, when Minerva in th' Olympian hall
 Amid the synod of celestials pour'd
 Her eloquence and wisdom, ev'ry god
 In silence heard, and Jove himself approv'd;
 Around Melissa thus were seen the chiefs 95
 In admiration bound; o'er all supreme
 Themistocles applauded. Mycon last,
 With her injunction charg'd, to Oeta's shrine
 Was now transporting in their polish'd urn
 The treasur'd ashes, when along the plain 100
 A sudden, new appearance strikes the sight,

Book XXVI. THE ATHENAID. 143

A fun'ral car, attended by a troop
Of olive-bearing mourners. They approach
Melissa; suppliant in her view expose
Embalm'd Masistius. Sent from Asia's camp, 105
A passage these had recently obtain'd
From good Leonteus, by his brother plac'd
Thermopylæ's sure guard. Melissa knew
The page Statirus, foremost of the train,
Who at her feet in agony began: 110

Thy late protector, cold in death's embrace,
Survey, thou holy paragon; his fall
Asopus saw. Before the hero climb'd
His fatal steed, to me this charge he gave.

“ If I return a conqueror this day, 115
“ To that excelling dame who made thee mine,
“ Who hath enlarg'd whate'er of wise and great,
“ Of just and temp'rate I to nature owe,
“ Refin'd

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“ Refin’d my manners, and my purest thoughts
“ Exalted, I my friendship will prolong 120
“ In gratitude and rev’rence ; blessing heav’n,
“ Which thus prefers Masiſtius to extend
“ Benevolence to virtue. If I fall,
“ Resume with her the happiest lot my care
“ Can recommend, Statirus. Though no Greek,
“ Her pupil, say, in offices humane 126
“ Hath not been tardy ; by her light inspir’d,
“ He went more perfect to a noble grave.”

Cast from his wounded courſer, he, o’erpow’r’d
By numbers, died. The body was restor’d 130
By Aristides, of unrivall’d fame
Among the just and gen’rous. O’er the dead
Mardonius rent his vesture, and his hair,
Then thus ordain’d : “ This precious clay embalm’d
“ To Artamanes bear, whose pious zeal 135
“ A friend’s remains to Sestus will convey,
“ Thence

Book XXVI. THE ATHENAID. 145

“ Thence o'er the narrow Hellespont to reach
“ His native Asia, and his father's tomb.”

I then repeated what my virtuous lord,
Expiring, utter'd: “ Let Mardonius think 140

“ How brief are life's enjoyments. Virtue lives
“ Through all eternity. By virtue earn'd
“ Praise too is long—Melissa, grant me thine”.

“ Commend me to Melissa, starting, spake
“ The son of Gobryas. From the shameful cross
“ Bid Artamanes in her presence free 146
“ Leonidas the Spartan.” All my charge
Is now accomplish'd faithfully to all.

Not far was Artamanes. From the train
Of Persians strode a giant stern in look, 150
Who thus address'd the satrap: Prince, behold
Briareus; hither by Mardonius sent,

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Guard of this noble body, I appear
A witness too of thy disgrace ; I see
These Greeks thy victors. Is th' Athenian chief
Among the band ? Themistocles advanc'd ; 156
To whom Briareus : Art thou he, who dar'd
My lord to battle on the plains of Thebes ?
Where have thy fears confin'd thee till this hour
That I reproach thee with thy promise pledg'd ? 160
But this inglorious enterprize on herds,
On flocks, and helpless peasants, was more safe,
Than to abide Mardonius in the field.
I now return. What tidings shall I bear
From thee, great conqueror of beeves and sheep ?

Say, I am safe, Themistocles replies 166
In calm derision, and the fun'r'al rites,
Thus at my leisure, to Laconia's king
Perform, while your Mardonius sleeps in Thebes.
The spirit of Leonidas, in me 170

Reviving,

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Reviving, shall from Oeta's distant top
Shake your pavilions on Asopian banks.
Yet, in return for his recover'd bones,
I, undisputed master of the main,
Will waft Masistius to a Persian grave. 175
Thou mayst depart in safety, as thou cam'st.

The savage hears, and sullenly retreats ;
While pious Medon thus accosts the dead :

Thou son of honour, to thy promise just,
Melissa's brother venerates the clay 180
Of her avow'd protector. Let my care
Preserve these reliques where no greedy worm,
Nor hand profane, may violate thy form ;
Till friendly gales transport thee to repose
Among thy fathers. Through Trachinian gates
He leads the sable chariot, thence conveys 186
Th' illustrious burden to Melissa's roof ;

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Statirus aids. The priestess, there apart,
Bespeak her brother thus: My tend'rest tears,
From public notice painfully conceal'd, 190
Shall in thy presence have a lib'ral flow.
Thou gav'st me this protector; honour, truth,
Humanity, and wisdom like thy own,
Were his appendage. Virtue is the same
In strangers, kindred, enemies and friends. 195
He won my friendship—might in earlier days
Have kindled passion—O! since fate decreed
Thee from Asopus never to return;
If by Melissa's precepts thou inspir'd
Didst go more perfect to a noble grave, 200
I blefs the hours; and memory shall hold
Each moment dear, when, list'ning to my voice,
Thou sat'st delighted in the moral strain.
Leonidas and thou may' pafs the floods
Of Styx together; in your happy groves 205
Think of Melissa. Welcom'd were ye both

By

Book XXVI. THE ATHENAID. 149

By her on earth; her tongue shall never cease,
Her lyre be never wanting to resound
Thee, pride of Asia, him, the first of Greeks,
In blended eulogy of grateful song. 210

She o'er the dead through half the solemn night
A copious web of eloquence unwinds,
Explaining how Mafistius had consum'd
Nine lunar cycles in assiduous zeal
To guard her fane, her vassals to befriend; 215
How they ador'd his presence; how he won
Her from the temple to Sandaucè's cure
At Amarantha's suit; within his tent
How clemency and justice still abode
To awe Barbarians; how, departing sad, 220
His last farewell at Oeta's shrine he gave
In words like these: "Unrivall'd dame, we march
"Against thy country—Thou shoul'dst wish our fall.

150 THE ATHENAID. Book XXVI.

“ If we prevail, be confident in me
“ Thy safeguard still—But heav’n, perhaps, ordains
That thou shalt never want Masistius more. 226

She pauses. Now her mental pow’rs sublime,
Collected all, this invocation frame.

O eleutherian fire! this virtuous light,
By thee extinguish’d, proves thy care of Greece. 230
Who of the tribes Barbarian now survives
To draw thy favour? Gratitude requires
This pure libation of my tears to lave
Him once my guardian; but a guardian new,
Thy gift in Medon, elevates at last 235
My gratitude to thee. Serene she clos’d,
Embrac’d her brother, and retir’d to rest.

From Oeta’s heights fresh rose the morning breeze.
A well-apparell’d galley lay unmoor’d

In

Book XXVI. THE ATHENAID. 151

In readiness to fail. Sandaucè drops 240
A parting tear on kind Melissa's breast,
By whom dismiss'd, Statirus on the corse
Of great Masistius waits. The Grecian chiefs
Lead Artamanes to the friendly deck,
In olive wreaths, pacific sign, attir'd, 245
Whence he the fervour of his bosom pours :

O may this gale with gentleness of breath
Replace me joyous in my seat of birth,
As I sincere on Horomazes call
To send the dove of peace, whose placid wing 250
The oriental and Hesperian world
May feel, composing enmity and thirst
Of mutual havoc ! that my grateful roof
May then admit Themistocles, and all
Those noble Grecians, who sustain'd my head, 255
Their captive thrice. But ah ! what founts of blood
Will fate still open to o'erflow the earth !

152 THE ATHENAID. Book XXVI.

Yet may your homes inviolate remain,
 Imparting long the fulness of those joys,
 Which by your bounty I shall soon possess! 260

He ceas'd. The struggle of Sandauce's heart
 Suppress'd her voice. And now the naval pipe
 Collects the rowers. At the signal shrill
 They cleave with equal strokes the Malian floods.

Meantime a vessel, underneath the lee 265

Of Locris coasting, plies the rapid oar
 In sight. She veers, and, lodging in her sails
 The wind transverse, across the haven skims;
 Till on Sperchēan sands she rests her keel.

Themistocles was musing on the turns 270
 Of human fortune, and the jealous eye
 Of stern republics, vigilantly bent
 Against successful greatness; yet serene,
 Prepar'd for ev'ry possible reverse

In

Book XXVI. THE ATHENAID. 153

In his own fortune, he the present thought, 275
Of Persians chang'd from foes to friends, enjoy'd.
When lo! Sicinus landed. Swift his lord
In words like these the faithful man approach'd.

From Aristides hail! Asopus flows,
Still undisturb'd by war, between the hosts 280
Inactive. Each the other to assail
Inflexibly their augurs have forbid.
The camp, which Ceres shall the best supply,
Will gain the palm. Mardonius then must fight
To our advantage both of time and place, 285
Themistocles replies, and sudden calls
The diff'rent leaders round him. Thus he spake :

Eubœans, Delphians, Locrians, you, the chiefs
Of Potidæa and Olynthus, hear.
The ritual honours to a hero due, 290
Whom none e'er equall'd, incomplete are left;

Them shall the new Aurora see resum'd.

At leisure now three days to solemn games

I dedicate. Amid his num'rous tents

Mardonius on Asopus shall be told,

295

While he sits trembling o'er the hostile flood,

Of Grecian warriors on the Malian sands

Disporting. You in gymnic lifts shall wing

The flying spear, and hurl the massy disk,

Brace on the cæstus, and impel the car

300

To celebrate Leonidas in fight

Of Oeta, witness to his glorious fate.

But fifty vessels deep with laden stores

I first detach, that gen'ral Greece may share

In our superfluous plenty. Want shall waste 305
Mardonian numbers, while profusion flows

Round Aristides. To protect, my friends,

Th' important freight, three thousand warlike spears

Must be embark'd. You, leaders, now decide,

Who

Book XXVI. THE ATHENIAD. 155

Who shall with me Thermopylæ maintain, 310

Who join the Grecian camp. First Medon rose:

From thy successful banner to depart

Believe my feet reluctant. From his cross

When I deliver'd Lacedæmon's king,

My life, a boon his friendship once bestow'd,

I then devoted in the face of heav'n 316

To vindicate his manes. What my joy,

If I survive, if perish, what my praise

To imitate his virtue? Greece demands

In his behalf a sacrifice like this 320

From me, who, dying, only shall discharge

The debt I owe him; where so well discharge,

As at Asopus in the gen'ral shock

Of Greece and Asia? But the hundred spears,

Which have so long accompany'd my steps 325

Through all their wand'rings, are the only force

156 THE ATHENAID. Book XXVI.

My wants require. The rest of Locrian arms
Shall with Leontes thy controul obey.

Pois'd on his shield, and cas'd in Carian steel,
Whence issued lustre like Phœbean rays,

330

Thus Haliartus: Me, in peasant-weeds,

Leonidas respected. Though my heart

Then by unshaken gratitude was bound,

My humble state could only feel, not act.

A soldier now, my efforts I must join

335

With godlike Medon's, to avenge the wrongs

Of Sparta's king. But first the soldier's skill,

My recent acquisition, let my arm

Forever lose, if once my heart forget

The gen'rous chief, whose service try'd my arm,

Who made Acanthè mine. My present zeal

341

His manly justice will forbear to chide.

The priest of Delphi next: Athenian friend,

I have a daughter on Cadmēan plains,

My

Book XXVI. THE ATHENAID. 157

My Amarantha. From no other care, 345
Than to be nearer that excelling child,
Would I forsake this memorable spot,
Where died the first of Spartans, and a chief
Like thee triumphant celebrates that death.

Then Cleon proffer'd his Eretrian band, 350
Eight hundred breathing vengeance on a foe,
Who laid their tow'rs in ashes. Lampon next
Presents his Styrians. Brave Nearchus joins
Twelve hundred youths of Chalcis. Tideus last
Of Potidæa twice three hundred shields. 355

Enough, your number is complete, the son
Of Neocles reminds them. Swift embark ;
The gale invites. Sicinus is your guide.

He said, and, moving tow'rds the beach, observes
The embarkation. Each progressive keel 360
His eye pursues. O'er swelling now in thought,
His

158 THE ATHENAID. Book XXVI.

His own deservings, glory and success,
Rush on his soul like torrents, which disturb
A limpid fount. Of purity depriv'd,
The rill no more in music steals along, 365
But harsh and turbid through its channel foams.

What sea, what coast, what region have I pass'd
Without erecting trophies, cries the chief
In exultation to Sicinus staid?
Have I not spar'd the vanquish'd to resound 370
My clemency? Ev'n Persians are my friends.
These are my warriors. Prosp'rous be your fails,
Ye Greeks, enroll'd by me, by me inur'd
To arms and conquest. Under Fortune's wing
Speed, and assist my ancient rival's arm 375
To crush th' invader. Distant I uphold
The Grecian armies; distant I will snatch
My share of laurels on the plains of Thebes.
Then come, soft peace, of indolence the nurse,

Not

Book XXVI. THE ATHENAID. 159

Not to the son of Neocles. On gold 380
Let rigour look contemptuous ; I, return'd
To desert Athens, I, enrich'd with spoils
Of potentates, and kings, will raise her head
From dust. Superb her structures shall proclaim
No less a marvel, than the matchless bird 385
The glory of Arabia, when, consum'd
In burning frankincense and myrrh, he shews
His presence new, and, op'ning to the sun
Regenerated gloss of plumage, tow'rs,
Himself a species. So shall Athens rise 390
Bright from her ashes, mistress sole of Greece.
From long Piræan walls her winged pow'r
Shall awe the Orient, and Hesperian worlds.
Me shall th' Olympic festival admit
Its spectacle most splendid . . . Ah ! suprefs 395
Immod'rate thoughts, Sicinus interrupts,
Thou citizen of Athens ! Who aspires,
Resides not there secure. Forbear to sting

Her

Her ever-wakeful jealousy, nor tempt
The woes of exile. For excess of worth 400
Was Aristides banish'd. Be not driv'n
To early trial of thy Persian friends.

O ! thou transcendent, thou stupendous man,
From thy Timothea moderation learn,
Which, like the stealing touch of gentle time 405
O'er canvas, pencil'd by excelling art,
Smooths glaring colours, and imparts a grace
To mightiest heroes. Thus their dazzling blaze
Of glory soft'ning, softens envy's eye.

End of the Twenty-sixth Book.

THE

ATHENAID.

BOOK the TWENTY-SEVENTH.

MANTIME Briareus to the plains of Thebes
 Precipitates his course. Arriv'd, he greets
 Mardonius. Rumour had already told,
 What, now confirm'd, o'erwhelms the troubled chief,
 Confounded like the first anointed king 5
 O'er Israel's tribes, when Philistēan din
 Of armies pierc'd his borders, and despair
 Seduc'd his languid spirit to consult
 The forcerefs of Endor. Call, he said,
 Elēan Hegeſistratus—Be swift. 10

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 The sorceress of Endor. Call, he said,
 Elēan Hegesistratus—Be swift. 10

The

The summon'd augur comes. To him the son
 Of Gobryas: Foe to Sparta, heed my words;
 Themistocles possesses on our backs
 Th' Oetæan passes. Famine, like a beast,
 Noos'd and subservient to that fraudulent man, 15
 Who shuns the promis'd contest in the field,
 He can turn loose against us. In our front
 See Aristides. Fatal is delay.
 Fam'd are the oracles of Greece—Alas!
 My oracle, Mafistius, is no more. 20
 To thee, who hatest all the Spartan breed,
 I trust my secret purpose. Be my guide
 To some near temple, or mysterious cave,
 Whence voices supernatural unfold
 The destinies of men. The augur here: 25

The nearest, but most awful, is a cave
 Oracular, Lebadia's ancient boast,
 Where Jupiter Trophonius is ador'd,

Not

Not far beyond Copææ's neighb'ring lake,
Which thou must pass. With costly presents freight,
Such as magnificence like thine requires, 31
Thy loaded bark ; command my service all.

Mardonius issues orders to provide
The bark and presents. Summoning his chiefs,
To them he spake : My absence from the camp 35
Important functions claim ; three days of rule
To Mindarus I cede. Till my return
Let not a squadron pass th' Asopian stream.

This said, with Hegesistratus he mounts
A rapid car. Twelve giants of his guard,
Detach'd before, await him on the banks
Of clear Copææ. Silver Phœbè spreads
A light, reposing on the quiet lake,
Save where the snowy rival of her hue,
The gliding swan, behind him leaves a trail 45
In

In luminous vibration. Lo! an isle
Swell's on the surface. Marble structures there
New gloss of beauty borrow from the moon
To deck the shore. Now silence gently yields
To measur'd strokes of oars. The orange groves, 50
In rich profusion round the fertile verge,
Impart to fanning breezes fresh perfumes
Exhaustless, visiting the sense with sweets,
Which soften ev'n Briareus; but the son
Of Gobryas, heavy with devouring care, 55
Uncharm'd, unheeding fits. At length began
Th' Elēan augur, in a learned flow
Of ancient lore, to Asia's pensive chief
Historically thus: Illustrious lord,
Whose nod controuls such multitudes in arms 60
From lands remote and near, the story learn
Of sage Trophonius, whose prophetic cell
Thou wouldest descend. An architect divine,
He for the Delphians rais'd their Pythian fane.

His

Book XXVII. THE ATHENAID. 165

His recompense imploring from the god, 65

This gracious answer from the god he drew:

“ When thrice my chariot hath its circle run,

“ The prime reward, a mortal can obtain,

“ Trophonius, shall be thine.” Apollo thrice

His circle ran; behold Trophonius dead. 70

With prophecy his spirit was endu'd,

But where abiding in concealment long

The destinies envelop'd. Lo! a dearth

Affects Bœotia. Messengers address

The Delphian pow'r for succour. He enjoins 75

Their care throughout Lebadian tracts to seek

Oracular Trophonius. Long they roam

In fruitless search; at last a honey'd swarm

Before them flies; they follow, and attain

A cave. Their leader enters, when a voice, 80

Revealing there the deity, suggests

Cure to their wants, and knowledge of his will

How to be worshipp'd in succeeding times.

To

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To him the name of Jupiter is giv'n.

He to the fatal sisters hath access;

85

Sees Clotho's awful distaff; sees the thread

Of human life by Lachesis thence drawn;

Sees Atropos divide, with direful shears,

The slender line. But rueful is the mode

Of consultation, though from peril free,

90

Within his dreary cell. In thy behalf

Thou mayst a faithful substitute appoint.

By Horomazes, no, exclaims the chief!

It is the cause of empire, from his post

Compels the Persian leader; none but he

95

Shall with your god confer. Transactions past

To Hegesistratus he now details,

His heart unfolding, nor conceals th' event

In Asia's camp, when Aemnestus bold,

The Spartan legate, prompted, as by heav'n,

100

Him singled out the victim to atone

The death of Sparta's king. Their changing course
Of navigation now suspends their words.

Against the influx of Cephissus, down
Lebadian vales in limpid flow convey'd, 105
The rowers now are lab'ring. O'er their heads
Hudge alders weave their canopies, and shed
Disparted moonlight through the lattic'd boughs ;
Where Zephyr plays, and whisp'ring motion breathes
Among the pliant leaves. Now roseate tincts 110
Begin to streak the orient verge of heav'n,
Foretok'ning day. The son of Gobryas lands,
Where in soft murmur down a channell'd slope
The stream Hercyna, from Trophonian groves,
Fresh bubbling meets Cephissus. He ascends 115
With all his train. Th' inclosure, which begirds
The holy purlieus, through a portal, hung
With double valves on obelisks of stone,
Access afforded to the steps of none

But

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But suppliants. Hegeſistratus accoſts 120
 One in pontific vefture station'd there:

Priest of Boeotia's oracle moſt fam'd,
 Dismiss all fear. Thy country's guardian hail,
 This mighty prince, Mardonius. He preserves
 Inviolat her fanes; her willing ſpears 125
 All range beneath his standards. To confer
 With your Trophonius, lo! he comes with gifts,
 Surpaſſing all your treaſur'd wealth can boast.
 His hours are precious, nor admit delay;
 Accept his ſumptuous off'rings, and commence 130
 The ceremonials due. At firſt aghast
 The holy man ſurvey'd the giant guard.
 Soon admiration follow'd at thy form,
 Mardonius. Low in ſtature, if compar'd
 With thoſe unſhapeſen ſavages, ſublime 135
 Thou trod'ſt in maſteſty of mien, and grace
 Of juſt proportion. Laſt the gems and gold,

Bright

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Bright vases, tripods, images and crowns,
The presents borne by those gigantic hands,
With fascinating lustre fix'd the priest 140
To gaze unsated on the copious store.

Pass through, but unaccompany'd, he said,
Illustrious Persian. Be th' accepted gifts
Deposited within these holy gates.

He leads the satrap to a grassy mount, 145
Distinct with scatter'd plantains. Each extends
O'er the smooth green his mantle brown of shade.
Of marble white an edifice rotund,
In all th' attractive elegance of art,
Looks from the summit, and invites the feet, 150
Of wond'ring strangers to ascend. The prince,
By his conductor, is instructed thus:

Observe yon dome. Thou first must enter there
Alone, there fervent in devotion bow

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Before two statues; one of Genius good,
Of Fortune fair the other. At the word
Mardonius enters. Chance directs his eye
To that expressive form of Genius good,
Whose gracious lineaments, sedately sweet,
Recall Mafistius to the gloomy chief.

O melancholy! who can give thee praise?
Not sure the gentle; them thy weight o'erwhelms.
But thou art wholesome to intemp'rate minds,
In vain by wisdom caution'd. In the pool
Of black adversity let them be steep'd,
Then pride, and lust, and fury thou dost tame.
So now Mardonius, by thy pow'r a entrall'd,
Sighs in these words humility of grief.

If heav'n, relenting, will to me assign
A Genius good, he bears no other name
Than of Mafistius. Oh! thou spirit bless'd,

(For

Book XXVII. THE ATHENAID. 171

(For sure thy virtue dwells with endless peace)

Canst thou, her seat relinquishing awhile,
Unseen, or visible, protect thy friend
In this momentous crisis of his fate; 175
Or wilt thou, if permitted? Ah! no more
Think of Mardonius fierce, ambitious, proud,
But as corrected by thy precepts mild;
Who would forego his warmest hopes of fame,
Of pow'r and splendour, gladly to expire, 180
If so the myriads trusted to his charge
He might preserve, nor leave whole nations fall'n,
A prey to vultures on these hostile plains.
Come, and be witness to the tears which flow,
Sure tokens of sincerity in me, 185
Not us'd to weep; who, humbled at thy loss,
Melt like a maiden, of her love bereav'd
By unrelenting death. My demon kind,
Do thou descend, and Fortune will pursue
Spontaneous and auspicious on her wheel 190

A track unchang'd. Here turning, he adores
 Her flatt'ring figure, and forsakes the dome.

Along Hercyna's bank they now proceed,
 To where the river parts. One channel holds

A sluggish, creeping water, under vaults

195

Of ebon shade, and soporific yew,

The growth of ages on the level line

Of either joyleſs verge. The satrap here,

Nam'd and presented by his former guide,

A second priest receives, conductor new

200

Through night-resembling shadows, which obscure

The sleepy stream, unmoving to the sight,

Or moving mute. A fountain they approach,

One of Hercyna's sources. From the pores

Of spongy rock an artificial vase

205

Of jetty marble in its round collects

The slow-distilling moisture. Hence the priest

A brimming

Book XXVII. THE ATHENAID. 173

A brimming chalice to Mardonius bears,
Whom in these words he solemnly accosts:

This fount is nam'd of Lethè. Who consults
Our subterranean deity, must quaff 211
Oblivion here of all preceding thoughts,
Sensations, and affections. Reach the draught;
If such oblivious sweets this cup contains,
I gladly grasp it, cries the chief, and drinks. 215

Ascending thence, a mazy walk they tread,
Where all the season's florid children shew
Their gorgeous rayment, and their odours breathe
Unspent; while musical in murmur flows
Fast down a steep declivity of bed 220
Hercyna, winding in a channel new,
Apparent often to the glancing eye
Through apertures, which pierce the loaden boughs

174 THE ATHENAID. Book XXVII,

Of golden fruit Hesperian, and th' attire
 Of myrtles green, o'ershadowing the banks. 225

In alabaster's variegated hues,
 To bound the pleasing avenue, a fane
 Its symmetry discover'd on a plat,
 Thick-set with roses, which a circling skreen
 Of that fair ash, where cluster'd berries glow, 230
 From ruffling gusts defended. Thither speeds
 Mardonius, there deliver'd to a third
 Religious minister supreme. Two youths,
 In snow-like vesture, and of lib'ral mien,
 Sons of Lebadian citizens, attend, 235
 Entit'led Mercuries. The seer address'd
 The Persian warrior: In this mansion pure
 Mnemosynè is worshipp'd; so in Greece
 The pow'r of memory is styl'd. Advance,
 Invoke her aid propitious to retain 240
 Whate'er by sounds, or visions, in his cave

The

Book XXVII. THE ATHENAID. 175

The prophet god reveals. The chief comply'd ;
The hallow'd image he approach'd, and spake :

Thou art indeed a goddess, I revere.

Now to Mardonius, if some dream or sign 245
Prognosticate success, and thou imprint
The admonitions of unerring heav'n
In his retentive mind ; this arm, this fword
Shall win thy further favour to record
His name and glory on the rolls of time. 250

This said, with lighter steps he quits the fane.

The Mercuries conduct him to a bath,
Fed from Hercyna's fairer, second source,
In shade sequester'd close. While there his limbs
Are disarray'd of armour, to assume 255
A civil garment, soon as spotless streams
Have purify'd his frame ; the priest, who stands
Without, in ecstacy of joy remarks

176 THE ATHENAID. Book XXVII.

The rich Mardonian off'rings on their way,
By servitors transported to enlarge 260
The holy treasure. Instant he prepares
For sacrifice. A fable ram is slain.

Fresh from ablution, lo ! Mardonius comes
In linen vesture, fine and white, as down
Of Paphian doves. A fash of tincture bright, 265
Which rivall'd Flora's brilliancy of dye,
Engirds his loins ; majestical his brows
A wreath sustain ; Lebadian sandals ease
His steps. Exchanging thus his martial guise,
Like some immortal, of a gentler mold 270
Than Mars, he moves. So Phœbus, when he sets,
Lav'd by the nymphs of Tethys in their grot
Of coral after his diurnal toil,
Repairs his splendours, and his rosy track
Of morn resumes. With partial eyes the priest
Explores the victim's entrails, and reports 276
Each

Book XXVII. THE ATHENAID. 177

Each sign auspicious with a willing tongue ;
Then to Mardonius : Thee, Bœotia's friend,
Magnificently pious to her gods,
Thee I pronounce a votary approv'd 280
By this Bœotian deity. Now seek
In confidence the cavern. But the rites
Demand, that first an image thou approach,
Which none, but those in purity of garb,
None, but accepted suppliants of the god, 285
Can lawfully behold. Above the bath
A rock was hollow'd to an ample space ;
Thence issued bubbling waters. See, he said,
The main Hercynian fount, whose face reflects
Yon Dædalēan workmanship, the form 290
Trophonius bears. Adore that rev'rend beard,
The twisted serpents round that awful staff,
Those looks, which pierce the mysteries of fate..

Next through a winding cavity and vast
He guides the prince along a mossy vault, 295

Rough with protuberant and tortuous roots
Of ancient woods, which, clothing all above,
In depth shoot downward equal to their height;
Suspended lamps, with livid glympse and faint,
Direct their darkling passage. Now they reach 300
The further mouth unclosing in a dale
Abrupt; there shadow, never-fleeting, rests.
Rude-featur'd crags, o'erhanging, thence expel
The blaze of noon. Beneath a frowning cliff
A native arch, of altitude which tempts 305
The soaring eagle to construct his nest,
Expands before an excavation deep,
Unbowelling the hill. On either side
This gate of nature, hoary sons of time,
Enlarg'd by ages to protentious growth, 310
Impenetrable yews augment the gloom.

In height two cubits, on the rocky floor
A parapet was rais'd of marble white,

In

Book XXVII. THE ATHENAID. 179

In circular dimension; this upholds
The weight of polish'd obelisks, by zones 315
Of brafs connected, ornamental fence.
A wicket opens to th' advancing prince;
Steps moveable th' attentive priest supplies;
By whom instructed, to the awful chasm
Below, profound but narrow, where the god 320
His inspiration breathes, th' intrepid son
Of Gobryas firm descends. His nether limbs
Up to the loins he plunges. Downward drawn,
As by a whirlpool of some rapid flood,
At once the body is from sight conceal'd. 325
Entranc'd he lies in subterranean gloom,
Less dark than superstition. She, who caus'd
His bold adventure, with her wonted fumes
Of perturbation from his torpid state
Awakes him; rather in a dream suggests 330
That he is waking. On a naked bank
He seems to stand; before him sleeps a pool,

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Edg'd round by desert mountains, in their height
 Obscuring heav'n. Without impulsive oars,
 Without a sail, spontaneous flies a bark 335
 Above the stagnant surface, which, untouched,
 Maintains its silence. On the margin rests
 The skiff, presenting to the hero's view
 An aged fire, of penetrating ken,
 His weight inclining on an ebon staff, 340
 With serpents wreath'd, who, beck'ning, thus began:

If, seed of Gobryas, thou wouldest know thy fate,
 Embark with me; Trophonius I am call'd.

Th' undaunted chief obeys. In flight more swift
 Than eagles, swiftest of the feather'd kind, 345
 Th' unmoving water's central spot they gain.
 At once its bosom opens; down they sink
 In depth to equal that immane descent
 Of Hercules to Pluto, yet perform,

As

As in a moment, their portentous way. 350

Around, above, the liquid mass retires,

In concave huge suspended; nor bedews

Their limbs, or garments. Two stupendous valves

Of adamant o'er half the bottom spread;

Them with his mystic rod the prophet smites. 355.

Self-listed, they a spacious grot expose,

Whose pointed spar is tipt with dancing light,

Beyond Phœbean clear. The Persian looks;

Intelligent he looks. Words, names and things,

Recurring, gather on his anxious mind; 360

When he, who seems Trophonius: Down this cave

None, but the gods oracular, may pass.

Here dwell the fatal Sisters; at their toil

The Destinies thou see'st. The thread new-drawn

Is thine, Mardonius. Instantly a voice, 365

Which shakes the grot, and all the concave round,

Sounds Aemnestus. Swift the direful shears

The line dis sever, and Mardonius, whirl'd

Back

182 THE ATHENAID. Book XXVII.

Back from Trophonian gloom, is found supine
 Within the marble parapet, which fenc'd 370
 The cavern's mouth. The watchful priest conducts
 The agitated satrap, mute and sad,
 Back to Mnemosynè's abode. His eyes
 Are sternly fix'd. Now, prince, the seer began,
 Divulge, whatever thou hast heard and seen 375
 Before this goddess. Priest, he said, suspend
 Thy function now importunate. Remove.

The seer withdrawn, the Persian thus alone:
 Then be it so. To luxury and pow'r,
 Magnificence and pleasure, I must bid 380
 Farewell. Leonidas let Greece extol,
 Me too shall Persia. Goddess, to thy charge
 A name, so dearly purchas'd, I confign.

This said, in haste his armour he resumes.
 Not as Leonidas compos'd, yet brave 385

Amid the gloom of trouble, he prefers
Death to dishonour. O'er the holy ground
He pensive treads, a parallel to Saul,
Return'd from Endor's necromantic cell
In sadness, still magnanimously firm 390
Ne'er to survive his dignity, but face
Predicted ruin, and, in battle slain,
Preserve his fame. Mardonius finds the gates ;
His friends rejoins ; glides down Cephissian floods ;
Copææ's lake repasses ; and is lodg'd 395
In his own tent by midnight. Sullen there
He sits ; disturb'd, he shuns repose ; access
Forbids to all : but Lamachus intrudes,
Nefarious counsellor, in fell device
Surpassing fellest tyrants. Now hath night 400
Upcall'd her clouds, black signal for the winds
To burst their dungeons ; cataracts of rain
Mix with blue fires ; th' ethereal concave groans ;

Stern

Stern looks Mardonius on the daring Greek,
Who, in his wiles confiding, thus began: 405

Supreme o'er nations numberless in arms,
Sole hope of Asia, thy return I greet
With joy. Thy absence hath employ'd my soul
To meditate the means, the certain means
For thee to prosper. Lo! the active son 410
Of Neocles, who keeps th' Oetaean pass,
Lo! Aristides in the camp of Greece,
Remain thy only obstacles. Her pow'r,
Of them depriv'd, would moulder and disperse,
Devoid of counsel, with an edgeless sword. 415
Uncommon danger stimulates the wise
To search for safety through uncommon paths,
Much more, when pow'r, when empire and renown,
Hang on a crisis. If a serpent's guile
Behind the pillows of such foes might lurk; 420
If darting thence, his unsuspected sting

Might

Book XXVII. THE ATHENAID. 185

Might pierce their bosoms; if the ambient air
Could by mysterious alchymy be chang'd
To viewless poison, and their cups infect
With death; such help would policy disdain? 425
Hast thou not hardy and devoted slaves?
Try their fidelity and zeal. No life
Can be secure against a daring hand.

Two Grecian deaths confirm thee lord of Greece.

He ceas'd, expecting praise; but honour burns
Fierce in the satrap's elevated soul: 431

Dar'st thou suggest such baseness to the son
Of Gobryas? furious he exalts his voice;
Guards, seize and strangle this pernicious wolf.

Time but to wonder at his sudden fate 435
The ready guards afford him, and the wretch.
Fit retribution for his crimes receives.

This

This act of eastern equity expels
 The satrap's gloom. Now, Grecian gods, he cries,
 Smile on my justice. From th' assassin's point 440
 I guard your heroes. By yourselves I swear,
 My preservation, or success, assur'd
 By such unmanly turpitude I spurn.

His mind is cheer'd. A tender warmth succeeds,
 Predominant in am'rous, eastern hearts, 445
 A balm to grief, and victor mild of rage.

The midnight hour was past, a season dear
 To softly-tripping Venus. Through a range
 Of watchful eunuchs in apartments gay
 He seeks the female quarter of his tent, 450
 Which, like a palace of extent superb,
 Spreads on the field magnificence. Soft lutes,
 By snowy fingers touch'd, sweet-warbled song
 From ruby lips, which harmonize the air.

Impregnated

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50
ed

Book XXVII. THE ATHENAID. 187

Impregnated with rich Panchæan scents, 455

Salute him ent'ring. Gentle hands unclasp

His martial harness, in a tepid bath

Lave and perfume his much-enduring limbs.

A couch is strewn with roses ; he reclines

In thinly-woven Taffeta. So long 460

In pond'rous armour cas'd, he scarcely feels

The light and loose attire. Around him smile

Circassian Graces, and the blooming flow'r's

Of beauty cull'd from ev'ry clime to charm.

Lo ! in transcending ornament of dress 465

A fair-one all-surpassing greets the chief ;

But pale her lip, and wild her brilliant eye :

Nam'd from Bethulia, where I drew my breath,

I, by a father's indigence betray'd,

Became thy slave ; yet noble my descent 470

From Judith ever-fam'd, whose beauty fav'd

Her native place. Indignant I withstood

Thy

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Thy passion. Gentle still a master's right
Thou didst forbear, and my reluctant charms 474
Leave unprophan'd by force. Repuls'd, thy love
Grew cold. Too late contemplating thy worth,
I felt a growing flame, but ne'er again
Could win thy favour. In the Haram's round
Disconsolate, neglected, I have walk'd;
Have seen my gay companions to thy arms 480
Preferr'd, professing passion far unlike
To mine, Mardonius. Now despair suggests
To give thee proof of undissimbled truth,
Which no neglect hath cool'd. To thy success,
Thy glory, my virginity is vow'd. 485
In this bright raiment, with collected pow'rs
Of beauty, I at Aristides' feet
Will throw me prostrate. To th' alluring face
Of my progenitrix a victim fell
Th' Assyrian captain, Holofernes proud; 490

So

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So shall thy foe of Athens fall by mine.

The meritorious and heroic deed

Soon will erase the transitory stain.

O! if successful, let Bethulia hope

For thy reviving love. Mardonius starts 495

In dubious trouble. Whether to chastise

So fierce a spirit, or its zeal admire,

He hesitates. Compassion for the sex

At length prevails, suggesting this reply:

Fell magnanimity! enormous proof 500

Of such intemp'rate passion! I forgive

While I reject thy proffer'd crime, although

The deed might fix my glory and success;

And in return for thy prepos'trous love

Will safe replace thee in thy native seat 505

With gifts to raise from indigence thy house.

But never, never from this hour will view

Thy

190 THE ATHENAID. Book XXVII.

Thy face again, Bethulia. Eunuchs, hear ;
Remove, conceal this woman from my sight.

No, thou inhuman, thus Bethulia wild : 510
This shall remove for ever from thy sight
A woman scorn'd, and terminate her pains.

She said, and struck a poniard through her heart.
With shrieks the Haram sounds ; th' afflicted fair,
The eunuchs shudder ; when the satrap thus :

Is this another black portent of ill, 516
Stern Horomazes ? or is this my crime ?
No, thou art just. My conscious spirit feels
Thy approbation of Mardonius now.

But from his breast the dire event expels 520
All soft and am'rous cares. His vast command,

His

II.
Book XXVII. THE ATHENAID. 191

His long inaction, and the dread of shame
Recur. He quits the chamber; to his own
Repairing, summons Mindarus, and firm
In aspect speaks: The morning soon will dawn. 525
Draw down our slingers, archers, and the skill'd
In flying darts to line th' Afopian brink;
Thence gall the Grecians, whose diurnal wants
That flood relieves. Then Mindarus: O chief,
This instant sure intelligence is brought, 530
That from the isthmus, to supply their camp,
A convoy, rich in plenty, is descry'd
Advancing tow'rds Cithæron's neighbouring pass.

516
Mardonius quick: No moment shall be lost.
Bid Tiridates with five thousand horse 535
Possess that pass, and, pouring on the plain,
Secure the precious store. This said, he seeks
520
A short repose, and Mindarus withdraws.

His
In

In arms anon to paragon the morn,
The morn new-rising, whose vermillion hand 540
Draws from the bright'ning front of heav'n serene
The humid curtains of tempestuous night,
Mardonius mounts his courser. On his bank
The godlike figure soon Asopus views.

End of the Twenty-seventh Book.

THE

A T H E N A I D.

BOOK the TWENTY-EIGHTH.

WHILE lamentation for Masistius dead
 Depress'd the Persians, undisturb'd the Greeks
 To all their camp refreshment had deriv'd
 From clear Asopus. To th' accustom'd edge
 Of his abounding flood they now resort. 5
 Stones, darts and arrows from unnumber'd ranks,
 Along the margin opposite dispos'd
 By Mindarus, forbid access. Repulse
 Disbands the Greeks. Exulting, he forgets
 Cleora; active valour in his breast 10

Extinguishes the embers, cherish'd long
 By self-tormenting memory, and warmth
 Of fruitless passion. Present too his chief,
 His friend and kinsman, from a fiery steed
 Mardonius rules and stimulates the fight, 15
 Like Boreas, riding on a stormy cloud,
 Whence issue darts of light'ning, mix'd with hail
 In rattling show'rs. The enemies dispers'd,
 Embolden Mindarus to ford the stream.
 In guidance swift of cavalry expert, 20
 With unreflected squadrons he careers
 Along the field. Inviolate the flood
 He guards; each hostile quarter he insults.

Now Gobryas' son, unfetter'd from the bonds
 Of superstitious terrors, joyful sees 25
 In Mindarus a new Mæstius rise;
 Nor less the tidings Tiridates sends,
 Who in Cithæron's passes hath despoil'd

The

The slaughter'd foes, inspire the gen'ral's thoughts,
Which teem with arduous enterprise. The camp 30
He empties all; beneath whose forming host
The meadow sounds. The native Persians face
Laconia's station, Greek allies oppose
Th' Athenian. All the force of Thebes array'd
Envenom'd Leontiades commands. 35

Greece in her lines sits tranquil; either host
Expect's the other. By their augurs still
Restrain'd, they shun the interdicted ford.
But of the river's plenteous stream depriv'd
By Mindarus, the Grecians fear a dearth 40
Of that all-cheering element. A rill
Flows from a distant spring, Gargaphia nam'd,
Their sole resource. Nor dread of other wants
Afflicts them less; their convoy is o'erpow'r'd
By Tiridates. Anxious all exhaust 45
A night disturb'd; the bravest grieve the most,

Lest through severe necessity they quit
Inglorious their position. Morning shines ;
When frequent signals from th' external guards,
Near and remote, successive rise. To arms 50
All rush. Along the spacious public way
From Megara, obscuring dust ascends.
The sound of trampling hoofs, and laden wheels,
With shouts of multitude, is heard. Behold,
Forth from the cloud, a messenger of joy, 55
Sicinus breaks, of bold auxiliar bands
Forerunner swift, and unexpected aid
In copious stores, at Megara's wide port
New-landed from Thermopylæ. The camp
Admits, and hails in rapturous acclaim 60
Eubœan standards, Potidæa's ranks,
The laurell'd priest and hero, Timon sage,
Th' ennobled heir of Lygdamis, and thee,
Melissa's brother, great Oileus' son,
Friend of Leonidas, thee dear to all, 65

O brave,

O brave, and gen'rous Medon ! From their tents
The chiefs assemble, when Sicus spake :

Pausanius, gen'ral of united Greece,
Accept these ample succours from the hand
Of provident Themistocles: Possess'd 70
Of Oeta's passes, he the Persian host
Now with impenetrable toils besets
Like beasts of prey, entangled by the skill
Of some experienc'd hunter. Thou receive,
Just Aristides, from Timothea's love, 75
A suit of armour new, in Chalcis fram'd,
Without luxuriant ornament, or gold.
The shield, an emblem of thy soul, displays
Truth, equity and wisdom, hand in hand.
This for her children, and thy own, consign'd, 80
To her Eubœan roof and pious care,
She bids thee lift and conquer. Thou restore
The little exiles in their native homes

To dwell in peace. Her gift, she adds, derives
Its only value from the wearer's worth. 85

In smiles, like Saturn at the tribute pure
Of fruits and flow'rs in singleness of heart
Paid by religion of the golden age,
Timothea's gift the righteous man receives,
Not righteous more than practic'd to endure 90
Heroic labours, soon by matchless deeds
To justify the giver. He began:

Confederated warriors, who withstand
A tyrant's pow'r, unanimous confess
Your debt to great Themistocles, the lord 95
Of all-admir'd Timothea. He and I
Evince the fruits of concord. Ancient foes,
Through her united, cheerful we sustain
Our public charge. From gen'ral union Greece
Expects her safety. Him success hath crown'd 100

In

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In arms and counsel; whether on the main
His naval flag he spread, or shook the land
With his triumphant step. O, hero-born
Pausanias! glowing with Herculean blood,
Now under thee let Aristides hope 105
To share success, nor tarnish with disgrace
His armour new. Behold, yon river gleams
With hostile arms. Those standards on the left,
Well-known to Attic eyes, are proudly borne
By native Medes and Persians. Treach'rous Thebes
Lifts her Cadmēan banner on the right. 111
A second time Mardonius forms his host
To proffer battle. He, perhaps, may ford
Asopus, which Tisamenus, the learn'd
In divination, hath forbid our steps 115
To pass. Thy former numbers swift arrange.
New from a march let these auxiliars guard
The camp. To him Pausanias thus apart:

Athenian, hear: Your citizens are vers'd
 In this Barbarian warfare, yet unknown 120
 To us. Let Spartans and Athenians change
 Their station. You, an adversary try'd
 At Marathon, and foil'd, will best oppose.
 To vanquish Grecians we accustom'd long
 Will yon Bœotians and Thessalians face. 125
 Such is my will. Concise the Attic sage:

Thou hast commanded what my willing thoughts
 Themselfes devis'd, but waited first to hear.
 Well canst thou fight, Pausanias. I will strive
 To imitate thy deeds and thy renown, 130
 On whose increase our liberty and laws
 Depend. This said, they part. Behind the rear
 Soon from the left th' Athenians, from the right
 The Spartans file. Their stations they exchange,
 Not by Mardonius unperceiv'd. He moves 135
 His Medes and Persians to the post of Thebes,

Whence

Book XXVIII. THE ATHENAI.D. 201

Whence still the Spartan phalanx they confront,
The Thebans still th' Athenian. This observ'd,
Pausanias swift to Aristides sends
Strict charge his old position to resume. 140

Now indignation high through all the tribes
Of Athens rages. Noble pride, and sense
Of just desert, in exclamation fierce
Break from th' exalted populace, who claim
Their soil for parent. Gods! from wing to wing
Must we like servile mercenary bands, 146
Like Helots, slaves to Lacedæmon born,
Be hurry'd thus obsequious to controul
From an imperious Spartan? Tegea first
Contested our prerogative. The pride 150
Of Sparta next removes us from the post,
Assign'd by public judgment; we comply.
Must we at her contemptuous nod resume
The station we forsook? Defending Greece,

Ourselves meanwhile deserted and betray'd, 155
Twice have we lost our city. What is left
Of our abandon'd residence, but dust?
Let Greece defend herself. Let us remove
For the last time our standards, hoist our sails,
Our floating empire fix on distant shores, 160
Our household gods, our progeny, and name,
On some new soil establish, sure to find
None so ingrate as this. The Athenians thus
Swell with ingenuous ire, as ocean boils,
Disturb'd by Eurus, and the rude career 165
Of Boreas, threat'ning furious to surmount
All circumscription. But as oft a cloud,
Distilling gentle moisture as it glides,
Dissolves the rigour of their boist'rous wings,
Till o'er the main serenity returns; 170
So from the mouth of Aristides fall.
Composing words. Insensibly he sooths
Their justly-irritated minds, and calms

Their

Their just resentment. Righteousness and truth,
How prevalent your efforts, when apply'd 175
By placid wisdom! In these strains he spake:

Ye men of Athens, at Laconia's call
To meet the flow'r of Asia's host in fight
Do ye repine? A station, which implies
Pre-eminence of Attic worth, a task 180
Of all most glorious, which the martial race
Of Sparta shuns, and you should covet most,
Ye Marathonian victors? In the fight
Of Greece, who trembles at a Median garb,
You are preferr'd for valour. Arms the same, 185
The same embroider'd vestment on their limbs
Effeminate, the same unmanly souls,
Debas'd by vices and monarchal rule,
The Medes retain, as when their vanquish'd ranks
Fled heretofore. With weapons often try'd, 190

K 6 With.

204 THE ATHENAIID. Book XXVIII.

With confidence by victories increas'd,
Not now for liberty and Greece alone
You march to battle; but to keep unspoil'd
Your trophies won already, and the name,
Which Marathon and Salamis have rais'd, 195
Preserve unstain'd; that men may ever say,
Not through your leaders, not by fortune there
You triumph'd, but by fortitude innate,
And lib'ral vigour of Athenian blood.

He said and march'd. All follow mute through
love 200
Of Aristides, inexpressive love,
Which melts each bosom. Solemn they proceed,
Though lion-like in courage, at his call
Meek and obedient, as the fleecy breed
To wonted notes of Pan's conducting pipe. 205

Arriv'd, disbanded, in their sep'rate tents
Cecropia's tribes exhaust a tedious night,

Unvisited

Unvisited by sleep. The morning breaks;
Instead of joy to gratulate her light
The tone of sadness from dejected hearts, 210
Combining sighs and groans in murmur deep,
Alarms the leader. Aristides, shew
Thy countenance amongst us, hasty spake
The warrior-poet ent'ring: All thy camp
Enthusiastic sorrow hath o'erwhelm'd, 215
And ev'ry heart unbrac'd. By earliest dawn
Each left his restless couch. Their first discourse
Was calm, and fill'd with narratives distinct
Of thy accomplishments, and worth. At length
A soldier thus in agitation spake: 220
“ Yet, O most excellent of Gods! O Jove!
“ This is the man, we banish'd! In thy sight
“ The most excelling man, whose sole offence
“ Was all-transcending merit, from his home
“ Our impious votes expell'd, by envy's spight 225
“ Seduc'd. We drove him fugitive through Greece;
“ Where

“ Where still he held ungrateful Athens dear,
 “ For whose redemption from her sloth he rous’d
 “ All Greece to arms.” The soldier clos’d in floods
 Of anguish. Instant through the concourse ran
 Contagious grief; as if the fiend Despair,
 From his black chariot, wheeling o’er their heads
 In clouds of darkness, dropp’d his pois’rous dews
 Of melancholy down to chill the blood,
 Unnerve the limbs, and fortitude dissolve.
 Speed, Aristides. By th’ immortal pow’rs!
 The feeblest troop of Persians in this hour
 Might overcome the tame, desponding force
 Of thy dear country, mistress long confess’d
 Of eloquence and arts, of virtue now
 Through thy unerring guidance. Here the sage:

With-hold thy praise, good Æschylus—Be swift,
 Arrange my fellow citizens in arms
 Beneath each ensign of the sever’l tribes.

I will

I will appear a comforter, a friend,
Their public servant. *Æschylus withdraws.*

Soon Aristides, in his armour new,
Timothea's gift, advances from his tent.
Should from his throne th' Omnipotent descend
In visitation of the human race, 250
While dreading his displeasure; as to earth.
All heads would bend in reverential awe,
Contrite and conscious of their own misdeeds;
So look th' Athenians, though in all the pomp
Of Mars array'd, and terrible to half 255
The world in battle. Down their corslets bright
Tears trickle, tears of penitence and shame,
To see their injur'd patriot chief assume
In goodness heav'n's whole semblance, as he moves
Observant by, and through the weeping ranks 260
From man to man his lib'r'al hand extends,
Consoling. No resentment he could shew,

Who

Who none had felt. Ascending now on high,
He thus address'd the penitential throng.

Rate not too high my merit, nor too low 265

Your own deprecate. Error is the lot
Of man; but lovely in the eye of heav'n
Is sense of error. Better will you fight,
As better men from these auspicious tears,
Which evidence your worth, and please the gods.

With strength and valour, equity of mind 271

Uniting doubles fortitude. Your wives,
Your progeny and parents, laws and rites,
Were ne'er so well secur'd. The warlike bard
Rose next: Requested by the sev'ral tribes, 275

In their behalf I promise to thy rule
All acquiescence. Bid them fight, retreat,
Maintain, or yield a station; bid them face
Innumerable foes, surmount a foss
Deep as the sea, or bulwarks high as rocks; 280

Subordination,

Subordination, vigilance, contempt
Of toil and death, thy dictates shall command.

Th' Oilean hero, Timon, and the seed
Of Lygdamis, are present, who encamp'd
Among th' Athenians. They admire the chief,
Nor less the people. While the term of morn 286
Was passing thus, a summons to his tent
Calls Aristides. Aemnestus there
Salutes him: Attic friend, a new event
In Sparta's quarter is to thee unknown; 290
From me accept th' intelligence. The sun
Was newly ris'n, when o'er th' Asopian flood
An Eastern herald pass'd. Behind him tow'r'd
A giant-siz'd Barbarian. He approach'd
Our camp; before Pausanias brought, he spake:

“ I am Briareus, of Mardonian guards 295
Commander. Through my delegated mouth

“ Thus

210 THE ATHENAID. Book XXVIII.

“ Thus faith the son of Gobryas : I have heard
“ Among the Greeks your prowess vaunted high,
“ Ye men of Sparta, that in martial ranks 300
“ You either kill, or perish ; but I find,
“ Fame is a liar. I expected long, ^{circumstances}
“ You would defy me on the field of war.
“ Have I not seen you shift from wing to wing,
“ The task imposing on th' Athenians twice 305
“ To face the Medes and Persians ; while yourselves
“ Sought with our servants to contend in arms,
“ Ye brave in name alone ! Since you decline
“ To challenge us, we, prime of eastern blood,
“ With equal numbers challenge you to prove, 310
“ That you possess, what rumour hath proclaim'd,
“ The boldest hearts in Greece. Acknowledge else
“ Your boasted valour bury'd in the grave
“ With your Leonidas, o'erthrown and slain.”

Pausanias gave no answer, not through fear, 315
But humour torpid and morose, which wrapp'd

In

In clouds of scorn his brow. Consulting none,
With silent pride the giant he dismiss'd.

The challenger, in triumph turning back,
Repass'd the river. Aemnestus paus'd ; 320

A second messenger appear'd. Behold,
In blooming vigour, flush'd by rapid haste,
Young Menalippus, from the rev'rend seer
Megistias sprung. Athenian chief, he said,
Bring down thy active, missile-weapon'd troops ;
On their immediate help Pausanias calls. 326

A cloud of hostile cavalry invests
Laconia's quarter. Javelins, arrows, darts,
In sheets discharg'd, have choak'd our last resource,
Gargaphia's fountain, and our heavy bands 330.

Perplex and harrass. Aristides hears,
And issues swift his orders, while the youth
Continues thus : Thou knew'st of old my fire,
Who at Thermopylæ expir'd. The just
Consort together. Aristides thus : 335

Ingenuous

Ingenuous youth, for Greece thy father bled
 A spotless victim, but for ever lives
 Companion with Leonidas in fame.
 By heav'n protected, thou shalt live to see
 Their death aton'd; the period is not far. 340
 Come on; my force is ready. Medon arms
 With Haliartus, once the shepherd-swain
 In Oeta's pass to Menalippus known,
 Whom both embrace with gratulation kind.

All march, but reach not Sparta's distant wing,
 Before the Persians, fated with success, 346
 Fil'd back to join Mardonius. Secret he
 Was communing with Mirzes, most renown'd
 Among the Magi. Thus the satrap clos'd:

Through each occurrence undisguis'd, O sage!
 My circumstantial narrative hath run, 351
 From where I enter'd first Trophonian ground,
 Till

Till my descent and vision in the cave.
Speak frankly, Mirzes—nor believe thy words,
Whatever black presages they contain, 355
Subjoin'd to all Trophonius hath foretold,
Can change my firm resolves, or blunt my sword.

Solicitude for Persia to excess
Misled thee, satrap, to that graven god,
Rejoins the Magus, where, if ought besides 360
The craft of Grecian, mercenary priests,
It was the demon Arimanus rul'd.
He long hath prompted that Elēan seer,
Who blunts thy sword by divination false.
What thou dost vision call was empty dream; 365
Imagination heated, and disturb'd,
A texture wild and various, intermix'd
With ill-match'd images of things, which last
Oppress'd thy mind. Thy own distemper fram'd
Th' unreal grot, where Destinies of air 370

In

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In apparition cut thy vital thread ;
 Their act was thine, the oracle thy own,
 All vague creation of thy erring sleep.

Briareus enters. At his tidings glad,

Which ostentation sounded, thus exults 375

Mardonius: Sayst thou, Lacedæmon's chief
 Was mute, when my defiance shook his ear ?

Hence to the winds, ye auguries and signs !

Ye dreams and mysteries of Greece, avaunt !

Thou, Horomazes, not in marble fanes, 380

Nor woods oracular, and caves, dost dwell.

It is the pow'r of evil there misguides

Insensate mortals, and misguided me.

O, Artemisia ! now shall Gobryas' son

Look only, where no mystery can lurk, 385

On ev'ry manly duty. Nothing dark

The tracks of honour shades. To chiefs select,

Greek and Barbarian summon'd, he reveals

Book XXVIII. THE ATHENAID. 215

His fix'd resolves in council. They disperse
To execute his will. Among the rest 390
Young Alexander, Macedonia's lord,
Speeds to his quarters in the solemn bower
Of Dircè. There Mardonius had decreed
A cenotaph of marble, newly-rais'd
To his deplo'red Mæstius. There the queen 395
Of Macedon, Phœbean Timon's child,
Bright Amarantha, like an evening bird,
Whose trill delights a melancholy grove,
Oft with harmonious skill in Delphian strains,
Th' ingenuous practice of her maiden days, 400
Sung of her father, and Mæstius good,
That friend, that known protector. She her lute
Was now in cadence with Dircæan rills
Attuning. Vocal melody she breath'd,
Which at another season might have won 405
Her lord from sadness. Sighing, he her song
Thus interrupts: Ah! comfort-dear, as fair

I come

I come from Persia's council; where the son
Of Gobryas, urg'd by fear of sudden want
Through his wide host, nor animated less 410
By Spartan silence at the challenge proud
His herald bore, determines to reject
The augur's warnings. O'er the stream he means
To lead th' embattled nations, and surprise
Ere dawn, at least assail the camp of Greece 415
In ev'ry station. If she quits her lines,
Then will his num'rous cavalry surround
Her heavy phalanx on the level space.
O that my ancestor had never left
His Grecian home in Argos, nor quit'd 420
Emathia's crown! I never then compell'd,
Had borne reluctant arms against a race
By friendship link'd, affinity, and blood,
With me and mine. What horror! cries the queen,
While fear surmises, that my husband's sword 425
May blindly cut my father's vital thread.

But

But not alone such parricide to shun
Should wake thy efforts. Alexander, no ;
Thou must do more. Our mutual words recall,
When thou to Athens by Mardonius sent 430
Didst from thy fruitless ambassy rejoin
Me in Trachiniæ; whence the Barb'rous chief
Renew'd his march to lay Cecropian domes
In fresh destruction. “ What a lot is mine,
“ Thou saidst ? If Xerxes triumph, I become 435
“ A slave in purple. Should the Greeks prevail,
“ Should that Eubœan conqueror, the son
“ Of Neocles be sent th' Athenian scourge

I interrupted thus : “ Awhile, dear lord,
“ We must submit to wear the galling mask, 440
“ Necessity imposes. New events
“ Are daily scatter'd by the restless palm
“ Of fortune. Some will prove propitious. Wise,

218 THE ATHENAID. Book XXVIII.

“ To all benignant, Aristides serv’d

“ By us in season will befriend our state.”

445

Behold that season come ; let Grecian blood,
Which warms thy veins, inspire thy prudent tongue
This night th’ Athenian hero to apprise
Of all these tidings. Thus secure the Greeks
Against surprisal ; timely thus oblige 450
The first of men, and magnify thy name
In Greece for ages. Here the youthful king :

Though by oppressive Xerxes forc’d to war,

Shall I abuse the confidence repos’d

By great Mardonius, qualify’d to win 455

Regard at first, which intercourse augments ?

I will do all by honour’s rules allow’d,

Will act a neutral part, withdraw my troops,

Ev’n at the hazard of my crown and life,

If such my queen’s injunction. Ah ! forbear 460

To

To frown; what means this flushing of thy cheek?
Must I betray Mardonius to his foes?

She spake abrupt; he started at her look:
If forc'd obedience to a tyrant binds,

If more, than I, Mardonius holds thy heart, 465

Who has thy dearest confidence abus'd,

Thou wilt discredit my accusing tongue.

Could from this empty monument the shade

Of just Masistius rise, his awful voice

Would verify a story, till this hour 470

From thee conceal'd. My virgin hand in blood

Of one Barbarian miscreant once I stain'd;

Not to pollute my hymeneal state,

Nor lay Mardonius gasping at my feet

Like Mithridates in the streets of Thebes, 475

This hateful camp for Delphi I forsook,

Fled from a lawless and presumptuous flame,

Insulting me, thy queen, who boast descent

220 THE ATHENAID. Book XXVIII.

From holy Timon. While for his behoof
Collecting Greeks against their country's cause, 480
Thyself was absent, and Mardonius left
My only guardian ; scorning every tie,
His daring importunity of love
Affail'd thy consort's ear. What hope, what trust
In such Barbarians ? All their faith expir'd 485
With good Mafistius. Should the Greeks be foil'd,
How long will Macedon thy realm, how long
Will Amarantha be securely held
Against a satrap, whose ungovern'd will
May covet both ? Of this, O prince, be sure, 490
Her part of shame will Amarantha bear
But brief shall be its date. The poniard still,
Which once preserv'd my honour, I possess
To cut my period of dishonour short.

The prince impatient, yet attentive, heard 495
Her words ; when thus the measure of his wrath
From his full bosom rapidly o'erflow'd.

O impious

O impious breach of hospitable ties !
 O violation base of rights and laws,
 Exacting swift revenge from heav'n and man, 500
 From me the first ! Unparallel'd in form,
 O like the sister of thy Delphian god
 Immaculate ! Did sacrilegious hands
 This pure abode of chastity assail
 With profanation ? Less a friend to Greece, 505
 Than foe to false Mardonius, now I go.

He said, and order'd forth his swiftest steed.
 By moon-light, twinkling on a shaded track,
 He urg'd his secret way beyond the springs
 Asopian ; whence an outlet short and close 510
 Through mount Cithæron to th' adjacent line
 Of Aristides led. Meantime the sound
 Of steps advancing Amarantha heard ;
 She heard, and saw Mardonius. He his pace
 Stopp'd short, inclining with obeisance low 515

His stately frame. Through terror and amaze
 To earth she rigid grew, of pow'r to fly
 Depriv'd. He distant spake: Imperial dame,
 That he offended once, Mardonius makes
 A penitent confession. O! that fault

520

To no innate discourtesy impute,
 But Eastern manners, not as Grecian pure;
 The ignorance which err'd, by thee is chang'd
 To veneration. From my presence here,

Which ne'er before intruded on this seat

525

Of thy retirement, do not too severe
 A new offence interpret; rest assur'd,
 A solemn cause impels. He silent waits,
 Nor moves; till, gliding silently away,
 Like Dian fair and chaste, but less severe, 530
 'The queen withdrew, and tow'rds a gallant chief,
 Perhaps by her devices near his fall,
 Thus far relented; for the private wrong
 The frank atonement rais'd a generous sigh;

Against

I.

Book XXVIII. THE ATHENAID. 223

Against the public enemy of Greece, 535
Unquenchable she burn'd. Now left alone,
Before the cenotaph he kneel'd and spake:

To-morrow, O ! to-morrow let my helm
Blaze in thy beams auspicious, spirit bright,
Whose name adorns this honorary tomb! 540

The weight of Asia's mighty weal, the weight
Of fifty myriads on thy friend augments
From hour to hour. Yet purg'd of gloomy thoughts,
Clear of ambition, save to win the palm
Of victory for Xerxes, I approach 545

Thy suppliant. Thou an intercessor pure
For me, deceiv'd by Grecian feers and gods,
Before the throne of Horomazes stand,
That he may bless my standards, if alone
To guard so many worshippers, and spread 550
By their success his celebrated name
Through each Hesperian clime. Now grant a sign,

Mafistius, ere thy faithful friend depart,
Fix'd, as he is, to vanquish, or to fall.

He ceas'd. Quick rapture dims his cheated eyes.
He sees in thought a canopy of light, 556
Descending o'er the tomb. In joy he speeds
To preparation for the destin'd march.

End of the Twenty-eighth Book.

THE

A T H E N A I D.

BOOK the TWENTY-NINTH.

AMONG the Greeks their first nocturnal watch
 Was near its period. From Laconia's wing
 Return'd, th' Athenian leader thus bespeak
 Sicinus : Worthy of my trust, give ear.
 Within six hours the army will decamp
 To chuse a friendlier station; so the chiefs
 In gen'ral council, as Gargaphia choak'd
 Withholds her wonted succour, have resolv'd.
 At Juno's fane, yet undespoil'd, though near
 Platæa's ruins, ev'ry band is charg'd

10

L 5

To

To reassemble. . . . Suddenly appears
A centinel, who speaks : A stranger, near
The trenches waits, thee ; us in peaceful words
Saluting, he importunate requires
Thy instant presence. Aristides hastes ; 15
To whom the stranger : Bulwark of this camp,
Hear, credit, weigh, the tidings which I bear.
Mardonius, press'd by fear of threat'ning want,
At night's fourth watch the fatal stream will pass,
Inflexibly determin'd, though forbid 20
By each diviner, to assail your host
With all his numbers. I against surprise
Am come to warn you ; thee alone I trust,
My name revealing. I, O man divine !
I, who thus hazard both my realm, and life, 25
Am Alexander, Macedonian friend
Of Athens. Kindly on a future day
Remember me. He said, and spurr'd his steed
Back through the op'ning of Cithæron's hill.

Book XXIX. THE ATHENAID. 227

By Aristides instantly detach'd, 30
Sicinus calls each leader to attend
Pausanias. Attica's great captain joins
The council full. His tidings he relates,
Concluding thus with exhortation sage :

We destitute of water had resolv'd 35
To change our station. Now without a pause
We must anticipate th' appointed hour
For this retreat, nor ling'ring tempt the force
Of squadrons swift to intercept our march.
All move your standards. Let Mardonius bring
A host discourag'd by their augur's voice; 41
Who are forbid to pass the fatal stream,
But are compell'd by famine and despair
To inauspicious battle. We to heav'n
Obedient, heav'n's assistance shall obtain. 45
A situation, safeguard to our flanks
Against superior and surrounding horse,

In sight of burnt Platæa, of her fanes
 Defac'd, and violated gods, I know ;
 There will assure you conquest. All assent. 50

At once the diff'rent Grecians, who compose
 The center, lift their ensigns. O'er the plain
 First swiftly tow'rds Platæan Juno's dome
 Speeds Adimantus. In array more slow
 The rest advance. Cleander guards the rear ; 55
 Brave youth, whom chance malicious will bereave
 Of half the laurels to his temples due.

Th' Athenians arm delib'rate ; in whose train
 Illustrious Medon ranks a faithful troop,
 His hundred Locrians. Haliartus there, 60
 There Timon's few, but gen'rous Delphians stand,
 By Aristides all enjoin'd to watch
 Laconia's host. That sternly-tutor'd race,
 To passion cold, he knew in action slow,

In

Book XXIX. THE ATHENAID. 229

In consultation torpid. Anxious long 65

He waits, and fears the eyelids of the morn,

Too soon unclosing, may too much reveal.

Sicinus, hast'ning to Laconia's camp,

Finds all confus'd, subordination lost

In altercation, wond'rous in that breed 70

Of discipline and manners, nor less strange,

Than if the laws of nature in the sky

Dissolv'd, should turn the moon and planets loose

From their accustom'd orbits, to obey

The sun no longer. When his first command 75

Pausanias issu'd for the march, nor thought

Of disobedience to disturb his pride;

One leader, Amompharetus, whose band

Of Pitane rever'd him, as the first

Among the brave, refusal stern oppos'd,

Protesting firm, he never would retreat

Before Barbarians. Aemnestus swift,

80

Callicrates

230 THE ATHENAI'D. Book XXIX.

Callicrates and others, long approv'd
In arms, entreat the Spartan to submit,
Nor disconcert the salutary plan 85
Of gen'ral council. Sullen he replies:

Not of that council, I will ne'er disgrace
The Spartan name. But all the Greeks withdrawn
Expect our junction at Saturnia's dome,
Callicrates and Aemnestus plead. 90
Would'st thou expose thy countrymen to face
Unaided yonder multitude of Medes,
Untry'd by us in combat? Yes, rejoins
The pertinacious man, ere yield to flight.

His troop applauded. Now contention harsh 95
Resounded high, exhausting precious hours,
The Spartan march retarding; when arriv'd
Sicinus witness to the wild debate.
At length Pausanias knit his haughty brow

At

Book XXIX. THE ATHENAIID. 231

At Amompharetus, and spake: Weak man, 100
Thou art insane. The chastisement thy due,
Our time allows not. Instant march, or stay
Behind and perish. In his two-fold grasp
The restive Spartan lifting from the ground
A pond'rous stone, before the gen'ral's feet 105
Plac'd it, and thus: Against dishonest flight
From strangers vile, I rest my suffrage there,
Nor will forsake it. To Sicius turn'd
Pausanias: Tell th' Athenians what thou see'st.
I by Cithæron's side to Juno's fane 110
Am hast'ning; charge their phalanx to proceed.

Sicius back to Aristides flies.

His ready phalanx from the lines he draws,
Wing'd with his horse and bowmen; yet his course
Suspends at Sparta's camp. There fullen, fix'd 115
Like some old oak's deep-rooted, knotted trunk,

Which

Which hath endur'd the tempest-breathing months
 Of thrice a hundred winters, yet remains
 Unshaken, there amidst his silent troop
 Sat Amompharetes. To him the sage : 120

Unwise, though brave, transgressing all the laws
 Of discipline, though Spartan born and train'd;
 Arise, o'ertake thy gen'ral and rejoin.

Thy country's mercy by some rare exploit
 Win to forgive thy capital default, 125

Excess of courage. Where Pausanias, arm'd
 With pow'r unlimited in war, where all
 The Spartan captains in persuasion fail'd,

Requir'd not less than Jove himself, or Jove
 In Aristides to prevail. Uprose 130

The warrior, late inflexible; yet slow,
 In strictest regularity of march,
 Led his well-order'd files. Correcting thus

The

Book XXIX. THE ATHENAID. 233

The erring Spartan, Aristides swept
Across the plain to fill the gen'ral host.

135

Not yet the twilight, harbinger of morn,
Had overcome the stars. The Persian scouts,
Who rang'd abroad, observing that no sound
Was heard, no watch-word through the Grecian
lines,

Adventur'd nigh, and found an empty space. 140
Swift they appris'd Mardonius, who had form'd
His whole array. Encircled by his chiefs
Greek and Barbarian, first he gave command,
'That ev'ry hand provide a blazing torch
To magnify his terrors, and with light 145
Facilitate pursuit; then gladsome thus
Addres'd his friends of Thessaly and Thebes:

Now Larissæan Thorax, and the rest
Of Aleuadian race; now Theban lords,

Judge

Judge of the Spartans justly. Vaunted high 150

For unexampled prowess, them you saw

First change their place, imposing on the sons

Of Athens twice the formidable task

To face my chosen Persians; next they gave

To my defiance no reply, and last 155

Are fled before me. Can your augurs shew

A better omen, than a foe dismay'd?

But, kind allies, to you my friendly care

Shall now be prov'd. These thunderbolts of war,

As you esteem them, will Mardonius chuse 160

For his opponents. Level your attack

Entire against th' Athenians. None I dread;

Yet by the sun less terrible to me

Is that Pausanias, head of Sparta's race,

Than Aristides. Him Mardonius lov'd; 165

If you o'erthrow, preserve him; in the name

Of your own gods I charge you. Mithra, shine

On me no longer, if in grateful warmth

Confessing

X.
50
Book XXIX. THE ATHENAID. 235

Confessing ev'ry benefit receiv'd,
I do not clasp that guardian of my friend! 170
Now, Persians, mount your bold Nisæan steeds,
Alert your targets grasp, your lances poise;
The word is Cyrus. Royal spirit! look
On me, deriv'd from thy illustrious blood,
Yet not in me illustrious, if this day 175
My hand, or courage faint. Look down on these,
Sons of thy matchless veterans. The fire,
Which at thy breath o'erspread the vanquish'd East,
Light in their off'spring; that the loud report
Of their achievements on Asopian banks, 180
Far as the floods of Ganges may proclaim
The western world a vassal to thy throne.

He said, and spurr'd his courser. Through the ford
He dashes, follow'd by th' impetuous speed
Of tall equestrian bands in armour scal'd 185
With gold, on trappings of embroider'd gloss

Superbly

Superbly seated. Persians next and Medes
Advance, an infantry select, whose mail
Bright-gilt, or silver'd o'er, augments the light
Of sparkling brands, innumerably wav'd 190
By nations, plunging through the turbid flood
In tumult rude, emblazing, as they pass,
The skies, the waters, and with direst howl
Distracting both. Like savage wolves they rush,
As with ferocious fangs to rend the Greeks, 195
To gnaw their flesh, and satiate in their blood
The greedy thirst of massacre. In chief
Here Mindarus commands, by Midias join'd
And Tiridates, powerless all to curb,
Much more to marshal such Barbarian throngs, 200
Which, like a tumbling tide on level strands,
When new the moon impels it, soon o'erwhelm'd
Th' Asopian mead; or like the mightier surge,
When ireful Neptune strikes the ocean's bed
Profound. Upheav'd, the bottom lifts and rolls

A ridge

A ridge of liquid mountains o'er th' abodes
Of some offending nation; while the heav'ns
With coruscation red his brother Jove 208
Inflames, and rocks with thunder's roar the poles.

Th' auxiliar Greeks compact and silent march
In strength five myriads. In arrangement just
The foot by Leontiades, the wings
Of horse by Thorax and Emathia's king
Were led. Now, long before th' unwieldy mass
Of his disorder'd multitude advanc'd, 215
Mardonius, rushing through the vacant lines
Of Lacedæmon, tow'rds Cithæron bent
His swift career. Faint rays began to streak
The third clear morning of that fruitful month,
The last in summer's train. Immortal day! 220
Which all the Muses consecrate to fame.

O thou! exalted o'er the laurell'd train,
High as the sweet Calliopè is thron'd

Above

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Above her sisters on the tuneful mount,
O father, hear ! Great Homer, let one ray 225
From thy celestial light an humble son
Of thine illuminate ; left freedom mourn
Her chosen race dishonour'd in these strains.
Thou too, my eldest brother, who enjoy'st
The paradise thy genius hath portray'd, 230
Propitious smile. Lend vigour to a Muse,
Who in her love of freedom equals thine,
But to sustain her labours from thy store
Must borrow language, sentiment and verse.

Cithæron's ridge, from where Asopus rose, 235
Stretch'd to Platæa, with a southern fence
Confining one broad level, which the floods
From their Hesperian head in eastward flow
Meandring parted. O'er the mountain's foot
His course Pausanias destin'd, where the soil 240
Abrupt and stony might the dread career

Of

Book XXIX. THE ATHENAID. 239

Of Persia's cavalry impede. His ranks,
Accompany'd by Tegea's faithful breed,
Had measur'd now ten furlongs of their march
Half o'er the plain to reach the friendly ground;

Then halted near an Eleusinian dome 246

Of Ceres; thence they mov'd, but timely first
Were join'd by Amompharetus. At length
The chosen track was gain'd. Pausanias cast
His eyes below first northward, and survey'd 250

Between the river and his empty camp
A blaze involving all the plain. The yell
Of mouths Barbarian, of unnumber'd feet
Th' impetuous tread, which crush'd the groaning
turf,

The neigh of horses, and their echoing hoofs, 255
Th' insulting clash of shields and sabres, shook
The theatre of mountains; hollow-voic'd,
Their cavities rebellow'd, and enlarg'd
The hideous sound. His eyes the orient dawn

Attracted

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Attracted next. Saturnia's roof he view'd, 260
But distant still, around whose sacred walls
The first-departed Grecians stood in arms
Beneath wide-floating banners, wish'd more nigh.
There was the Genius of Platæa seen
By fancy's ken, a hov'ring mourner seen, 265
O'er his renown'd, but desolated seat,
One mass of ruins mountainous. He mark'd
Th' Athenians traversing the meads below
In full battalia. Resolute, sedate,
Without one shield in disarray, they mov'd 270
To join the gen'ral host. Beyond the stream
In prospect rose the battlements of Thebes;
Whose sons perfidious, but in battle firm,
With phalanges of other hostile Greeks
Spread on the bank, and menace to surmount 275
The shallow current for some dire attempt.
To Aemnestus, marching by his side,
Pausanias turns; the army he commands

To

Book XXIX. THE ATHENAID. 241

To halt; while, mast'ring all unmanly fear,
His haughty phlegm serenely thus fulfils 280
A leader's function: Spartan, we in vain
Precipitate our junction with allies
At Juno's distant fane; the hour is past;
The Pitanēan mutineer the cause.
Seest thou yon Persian squadrons? They precede
The whole Barbarian multitude. The storm 286
Is gath'ring nigh; we sep'rate must abide
The heavy weight of this unequal shock,
Unless th' Athenians, still in fight, impart
A present aid. A herald swift he sends 290
To Aristides, with this weighty charge:
“ All Greece is now in danger, and the blood
“ Of Hercules in me. Athenian help
“ Is wanted here, their missile-weapon'd force.”
Last he address'd Tisamenus: Provide
The sacrifice for battle—Warriors, form. 295

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Slain is the victim ; but th' inspecting seer
Reveals no sign propitious. Now full nigh
The foremost Persian horse discharge around
Their javelins, darts, and arrows. Sparta's chief
In calm respect of inauspicious heav'n 301
Directs each soldier at his foot to rest
The passive shield, submissive to endure
Th' assault, and watch a signal from the gods.
A second time unfavorable prove 305
The victim's entrails. Unremitted show'rs
Of pointed arms distribute wounds and death.

Oh ! discipline of Sparta ! Patient stands
The wounded soldier, sees a comrade fall,
Yet waits permission from his chief to shield 310
His own, or brother's head. Among the rest
Callicrates is pierc'd ; a mortal stroke
His throat receives. Him celebrate, O muse !
Him in historic rolls deliver'd down

To

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To admiration of remotest climes 315

Through latest ages. These expiring words

Beyond Olympian chaplets him exalt,

Beyond his palms in battle : Not to die

For Greece, but dying, ere my sword is drawn,

Without one action worthy of my name, 320

I grieve. He said, and fainting on the breast

Of Aemnestus, breath'd in spouting blood

His last, departing thy attendant meet,

Leonidas, in regions of the bless'd.

A second victim bleeds ; the gath'ring foes 325

To multitude are grown ; the show'rs of death

Increase ; then melted into flowing grief

Pausanian pride. He, tow'rds the fane remote

Of Juno lifting his afflicted eyes,

Thus suppliant spake : O Goddess ! let my hopes

Be not defeated, whether to obtain

331

A victory so glorious, or expire

Without dishonour to Herculean blood.

Amidst the pray'r Tegēan Chileus, free
 From stern controul of Lacedæmon's laws, 335
 No longer waits inactive; but his band
 Leads forth, and firmly checks th' insulting foe.
 The sacrifice is prosp'rous, and the word
 For gen'ral onset by Pausanias giv'n.
 Then, as a lion, from his native range 340
 Confin'd a captive long, if once his chain,
 He breaks, with mane erect and eyes of fire
 Asserts his freedom, rushing in his strength
 Resistless forth; so Sparta's phalanx turns
 A face tremendous on recoiling swarms 345
 Of squadron'd Persians, who to Ceres' fane
 Are driv'n. But there Mardonius, like the god
 Of thunders ranging o'er th' ethereal vault
 Thick clouds on clouds impregnated with storms,
 His chosen troops embattles. Bows and darts 350
 Rejecting, gallantly to combat close.
 They urge undaunted efforts, and to death

Their

Book XXIX. THE ATHENAID. 245

Their ground maintain, in courage, or in might
Not to the Greeks inferior, but in arms,
In discipline and conduct. Parties small, 355
Or single warriors, here with vigour wield
The battle-ax and sabre; others rush
Among the spears, to wrench away, or break
By strength of hands, the weapons of their foes.

But fiercest was the contest, where sublime 360
The son of Gobryas from a snow-white steed
Shot terror. There selected warriors charg'd,
A thousand vet'rans, by their fathers train'd,
Who shar'd renown with Cyrus. On the right,
Close to his gen'ral's side, Briareus grasp'd 365
A studded mace, Pangæus on the left,
Nam'd from a Thracian hill. The bristly front
Of Sparta's phalanx, with intrepid looks
Mardonius fac'd, and thunder'd out these words :

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Come, twice-defy'd Pausanias, if thou hear'ſt ;
Thy Spartan prowess on Mardonius try. 371

Pausanias heard ; but shunn'd retorting words,
In saturnine disdain laconic thus
His men addressing : Yours the soldier's part,
The gen'rals mine ; advance not, but receive 375
These loose Barbarians on your steady points.

Not one of Persia's breed, though early train'd,
So strong a javelin as Mardonius lanc'd,
Or in its aim so true. Three brothers grac'd
The foremost line of Sparta, natives all 380
Of sweet Amyclæ, all in age and arms
Mature, their splendid lineage from the stock
Of Tyndarus deriving. Them on earth
Three javelins, whirl'd successive, laid supine,
An effort of Mardonius. Three in rank 385
Behind partake the same resistless doom,

Three

Book XXIX. THE ATHENAID. 247

Three bold companions in the hardy chace
Of boars on green Taygetus. Supply'd
With weapons new, the phalanx still to gore
He perseveres unweary'd, not unlike 390

Some irritated porcupine, of size
Portentous, darting his envenom'd quills
Through each assailant. In Laconia's front
So many warriors and their weapons fall'n,
Leave in her triple tire of pointed steel 395

A void for swift impression of her foes.

In rush Briareus and Pangæus huge,
Whose maces send fresh numbers to the shades.

The op'ning widens. On his vaulting steed
Mardonius follows, like ensanguin'd Mars 400
By his auxiliars grim, dismay and rage,
Preceded. Rivalling the lightning's beams,
The hero's sabre bright and rapid wheels.
Aloft in air. A comet thus inflames
The cheek of night; pale mortals view in dread

Th' unwonted lustre, transient tho' it be, 406

Among the lights of heav'n. Pausanias rous'd,

Advancing, at Briareus points his lance.

Meantime six Spartans of the younger class

Affail Mardonius. One his bridle grasp'd ; 410

The Persian sabre at the shoulder close

Lopp'd off th' audacious arm. Another stoop'd

To seize the chieftain's foot, and drag him down ;

Pois'd on his stirrup, he in sunder sinote

The Spartan's waist. Another yet approach'd, 415

Who at a blow was cloven to the chin.

Two more the gen'rous horse, uprearing, dash'd

Maim'd and disabled to the ground ; the last

His teeth disfigur'd, and his weight oppress'd.

As some tall-masted ship, on ev'ry side 420

Affail'd by pinnaces and skiffs whose strength

Is number, drives her well-directed prow

Through all their feeble clusters ; while her chief

Elate contemplates from her lofty deck

The

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The hostile keels upturn'd, and floating dead, 425

Where'er she steers victorious : so the steed

Nisæan tramples on Laconian slain,

Triumphant so Mardonius from his seat

Looks down. But fate amidst his triumph shews

Briareus yielding to a forceful blow 430

Of stern Pausanias, and Pangæus pierc'd

By Amompharetus. Their giant bulks,

Thrown prostrate, crash three long-pretended rows

Of Spartan spears. Wide-branching thus huge
oaks,

By age decay'd, or twisted from the roots 435

By rending whirlwinds, in their pond'rous fall

Lay desolate the under shrubs, and trees

Of young, unstable growth. More awful still,

Another object strikes the satrap's eye ;

With nodding plumes, and formidable stride, 440

Lo ! Aemnestus. Asia's gen'ral feels

Emotions now, which trouble, not degrade

250 THE ATHENAID. Book XXIX.

His gen'rous spirit. Not, as Priam's son
 On sight of dire Achilles, thoughts of flight
 Possess Mardonius, but to wait the foe, 445
 And if to die, with honour die, if live
 Enjoy a life of fame. His giant guard
 Around him close ; one levels at the casque
 Of Aemnestus ; but the weighty mace
 Slides o'er the Spartan's slanting shield, and spends
 Its rage in dust. The stooping giant leaves 451
 His flank unguarded, and admits a stroke,
 Which penetrates the entrails. Down he sinks,
 Another tow'r of Asia's battle strewn
 In hideous ruin. Soon a second bleeds, 455
 A third, a fourth. The fifth in posture stands
 To crush the victor with a blow well-aim'd ;
 Him Menalippus at the brawny pit
 Of his uplifted arm transpiercing deep
 Disables. Aemnestus struggles long 460
 To grapple with his victim, and invokes

Leonidas.

Leonidas aloud. The active son
Of Gobryas plants throughout the Spartan shield
A wood of Javelins. His Nisæan horse,
Careering, vaulting, with his fangs and hoofs 465
Protects his lord. The guards, who still surviv'd,
With faithful zeal their whole united strength
Exert unwearied for a lib'ral chief.
Some paces backward Aemnestus forc'd,
Impels his heel against a loos'ning stone, 470
Broad, craggy, scarce inferior to the weight
Discharg'd by Hector on the massy bars
Of Agamemnon's camp. The Spartan quick
From his left arm removes the heavy shield,
With javelins thick transfix'd. From earth he lifts
The casual weapon, and with caution marks 476
The fatal time and distance. O'er the heads
Of thy surrounding guard the fragment hurl'd
Descends, Mardonius, on thy manly chest,
And lays thee o'er thy courser's back supine 480

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Without sensation. O, illustrious man,
 Whose dazzling virtues through thy frailties beam'd !
 Magnanimous, heroic, gen'rous, pure
 In friendship, warm in gratitude ! This doom
 At once dissolves all interval of pain 485
 To mind, or body. Not a moment more
 Hast thou, ingenuous satrap, to repine,
 Or grieve. Go, hero, thy Mafistius greet,
 Where no ambition agitates the breast,
 No gloomy veil of superstition blinds, 490
 No friend can die, no battle can be lost !

This fall, to Greece decisive as to heav'n
 Enceladus o'erthrown, when, thunder-pierc'd,
 He under Ætna's torrid mass was chain'd,
 Discomfits Asia's hopes. In fresh array 495
 Meantime the phalanx, by Pausanias form'd,
 Proceeds entire. Facility of skill
 Directs their weapons ; pace by pace they move

True

True to the cadence of accustom'd notes
From gentle flutes, which trill the Doric lays 500
Of Alcman and Terpander. Slow they gain
The ground, which Persia quits, till Chileus bold
With his Tegæans gores the hostile flanks ;
Confusion then, and gen'ral rout prevail.

The fugitives proclaim Mardonius slain ; 505
The whole Barbarian multitude disperse
In blind dismay ; cool Mindarus in vain
Attempts to check their flight ; all seek the camp ;
And now the Spartan flutes, combin'd with shouts
Of loud Tegæans stimulate his speed 510
Across the ford. His trenches he regains,
And there to Midias, Tiridates brave,
And chosen satraps, gath'ring at his call,
Thus spake : The flow'r of Asia in the dust
Reclines his glories. Feel your loss like me, 515
Not overcome by sorrow, or surprise

At

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At changes natural to man, the sport
Of his own passions, and uncertain chance.
Vicissitudes of fortune I have prov'd,
One day been foil'd, a conqueror the next. 520
In arduous actions though experienc'd minds
Have much to fear, not less of hope remains
To animate the brave. Amid this storm
The throne of Cyrus, your exalted fires,
Your own nobility, recall; deserve 525
The rank, you hold; occasion now presents
For such a trial. To uphold my king,
My country's name, and piously revenge
My kindred blood new-spilt, my sword, my arm,
My life, I destine. Multitude is left, 530
Surpassing twenty myriads; ev'n despair
Befriends us; famine threat'ning, and the dread
Of merciless resentment in our foes,
May force these rally'd numbers to obtain 534
From their own swords relief. Behold your camp,
Strong-fenc'd

Strong-fenc'd and bulwark'd by Masistian care,
A present refuge. See th' auxiliar Greeks
Entire, advancing on th' inferior bands
Of Athens. Still may Xerxes o'er the West
Extend his empire, and regret no part
Of this disaster, but Mardonius slain.
Assume your posts, for stern defence provide.

540

End of the Twenty-ninth Book.

THE

ATHENAID.

BOOK the THIRTIETH.

O God of light and wisdom ! thee the Muse
Once more addresses. Thou didst late behold
The Salaminian brine with Asian blood
Discolour'd. Climbing now the steep ascent
To thy meridian, for a stage of war 5
More horrible and vast, thy beaming eye
Prepare. Thou over wide Platæa's field,
Chang'd to a crimson lake, shall drive thy car,
Nor see a pause to havoc, till the West
In his dark chamb'rs shuts thy radiant face. 10

Now

Now had the herald, to Cecropia's chief
Sent by Pausanias, in his name requir'd
Immediate aid. No doubt suspends the haste
Of Aristides; who arrays his ranks
With cordial purpose to sustain that strength 15
Of Greece, Laconia's phalanx. Lo! in sight
New clouds of battle hov'ring. He discerns
Th' array of Leontiades, with wings
Of Macedonic, and Thessalian horse;
Then calls Sicinus: Friend, he said, observe; 20
Robust and bold, to perfidy inur'd,
Not less than arms, yon Thebans cross our march.
I trust the justice of our cause will foil
Them, thrice our number; but events like this
Are not in man's disposal. If I fall, 25
Not rashly, good Sicinus, rest assur'd,
Themistocles survives. The gate of Greece
He guards, Eubœa and Thessalia holds,
Those granaries of plenty. Eastern shores
With

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With all his force, perhaps victorious now, 30
Xanthippus will relinquish, and maintain
The sea auxiliar to thy prudent lord;
Thus all be well, though Aristides bleeds:
This to Themistocles report. But go,
Fly to Cleander; him and all the Greeks 35
Rouse from the fane of Juno to the field;
Both Spartans and Athenians want their aid.
Thy tribe, undaunted Cimon, place behind
Olympiodorus; if his active bands
Repel Thessalia's horse, avoid pursuit; 40
Wheel on the flank of Thebes. Here Delphi's priest:

Behold Emathia's standards front thy right;
With Haliartus, and Oileus' son,
Let me be station'd there. I trust, the spouse
Of Amarantha, at her father's sight, 45
Will sheath a sword involuntary drawn,
Nor ties of hospitality and blood

Profane

Profane to serve Barbarians. I accept
The gen'rous offer, sage and gallant seer,
Spake Aristides. In that wing thy friend, 50
The learn'd and manly Æschylus presides.
But, to thy god appealing, I enjoin
Thy rev'rend head to cover in retreat
Its unpolluted hairs, should fire of youth,
Or yet more strong necessity, impel 55
Thy son to battle. Here th' enraptur'd priest:

The inspiration of my god I feel;
A glorious day to Athens I presage,
I see her laurels fresh. Apollo joins
His sister Pallas to preserve a race, 60
Which all the Muses love. His awful power
Will chain the monster parricide, and rouse
The Grecian worth in Alexander's heart.

These animated accents fire the line.
Within the measure of an arrow's flight 65
Each

Each army now rank'd opposite. A thought
 Of piety and prudence from his place
 Mov'd Aristides. Single he advanc'd
 Between the hosts ; offensive arms he left
 Behind him ; ev'n his plumed helm resign'd 70
 Gave to his placid looks their lib'ral flow.
 Before him hung his ample shield alone,
 Timothea's gift, whose sculptur'd face display'd
 Truth, equity, and wisdom hand in hand,
 As in his breast. Exalting high in tone 75
 His gracious voice, he thus adjur'd his foes :

Ye men deriv'd from Cadmus, who in Greece
 Establish'd letters, fruitful mother since
 Of arts and knowledge, to Barbarian spoil
 This hour expos'd ; ye sons of Locris, hear, 80
 Thessalians, Phocians, Dorians, all compell'd
 By savage force to arm against your friends,
 Of language, rites and manners with your own
Congenial:

Congenial : Aristides, in the name
 Of all the Grecian deities, invokes 85
 Your own sensations to disarm your hands
 Of impious weapons, which retard the help
 We bear to those now struggling in defence
 Of Grecian freedom, sepulchres and fanes.

He said ; was heard like Enoch, like the man
 Who walk'd with God, when eminently wise, 91
 Among th' obscene, the violent, and false,
 Of justice and religion, truth and peace
 He spake exploded, and from menac'd death
 To God withdrew. The fell Bœotians rend 95
 The sky with threat'ning clamour, and their spears
 Shake in defiance ; while the word to charge
 Perfidious Leontiades conveys.
 Retreating backward, Aristides cloaths
 His face in terror. So Messiah chang'd 100
 His countenance serenç, when full of wrath

Bent

Bent on Satanic enemies, who shook
 Heav'n's peaceful champaign with rebellious arms,
 He grasp'd ten thousand thunders, and infix'd
 Plagues in their souls ; while darts of piercing fire
 Through their immortal substances, by sin 106

Susceptible of pain, his glaring wheels
 Shot forth pernicious. Aristides leads
 His phalanx on. Now Greeks to Greeks oppose
 Their steely structures of tremendous war. 110

With equal spears and shields their torrent fronts
 They clash together ; like the jostling rocks,
 Symplegades Cyanean, at the mouth
 Of Thracia's foaming Bosphorus, were feign'd,
 Infrangible opponents, to sustain 115

A mutual shock which tempested the frith,
 Dividing Europe from the Orient world.

Meanwhile Phœbean Timon's glowing zeal,
 Replete with patriot and religious warmth,

Thus

Thus in the wing which Æschylus had form'd, 120

Bespake the encircling chieftains: O'er the space

Between Asopus, and the main array

Of Thebes, I see the Macedonian horse

But half advanc'd: Their tardy pace denotes

Reluctance. Lo! I meditate an act

125

To prove my zeal for universal Greece,

Her violated altars, and the tombs

Robb'd of their precious dust. My slender band,

So long companions in adventures high

With your choice Locrians, Haliartus, join 130

To Medon's banner. Æschylus, observe

My progress; if my piety succeeds,

Thou, as a soldier, take advantage full.

So saying, o'er the plain in solemn pace

His rev'rend form he moves, by snowy bands 135

Pontifical around his plumed helm

Distinguis'd. Thus from Salem's holy gate

Melchisedek,

Melchisedek, the priest of him Most High,
Went forth to meet, and benedictions pour
On Terah's son in Shaveh's royal vale.

140

The Macedonian squadrons at the sight
Fall back in rev'rence ; their dismounting prince
So wills. The father and the son embrace.

Oh ! Amarantha's husband ! joyful sighs
The parent. Oh ! my Amarantha's fire !
In equal joy the husband. Timon then :

145

A Greek in blood, to Delphi's priest ally'd,
The god of Delphi's blessing now secure ;
Abandon these Barbarians to the fate,
Which in the name of Phœbus I denounce
For his insulted temple, and the rape
Of Amarantha from Minerva's shrine.
Yet to unsheathe an unsuspected sword

Against

Against them, neither I, nor heav'n require,
 Less thy own honour; but repass the stream, 155
 Amid this blind uproar unnotic'd seek
 Thermopylæ again; and reach thy realm.
 O'er all that clime Themistocles prevails,
 My friend; his present amity obtain,
 Cecropia's future love, nor hazard more 160
 Thy fame and welfare. Aristides knows
 My truth, replies the monarch; now to thee
 Obedience prompt a second proof shall yield.
 Ascend a steed; to Amarantha's arms
 I will conduct thee first; th' auspicious flight 165
 Of both, a father shall assist and bless.

They speed away, in extasy the fire
 To clasp his darling child in Dirce's grove.

This pass'd in Medon's eye, who watchful stood
 With Haliartus, and a troop advanc'd, 170

In care for Timon. When apparent now
 The Macedonian squadrons quit the field
 Of strife, the heavy-cuirass'd of his wing
 With ferry'd shields by Æschylus is led,
 In evolution wheeling on the flanks 175
 Of that strong mass'd battalia, which compos'd
 The hostile center. First in phalanx stood
 Unwilling Locrians. Medon lifts his voice,
 And to each eye abash'd his awful shape,
 Like some reproving deity, presents ; 180
 They hear, they see Oileus in his son,
 As ris'n a mourning witness of their shame
 From his sepulchral bed. The bann'rs drop
 Before him ; down their spears and bucklers fall ;
 They break, disperse, and fly with childrens' fear,
 When by authority's firm look surpris'd 186
 In some attempt forbidden, or unmeet.
 Bœotian files are next. With sudden wheel
 They form a front, and dauntless wait the assault.

Still

Still in the van robust and martial Thebes 190
Unbroken stems th' agility and skill
Of her opponent Athens. Long unspent
The tide of well-conducted battle flows
Without decision strong. At length by fate
Is Leontiades impell'd to meet 195
Cecropia's chief, where Thebes began to feel
His mighty pressure. Whether justice strung
His nerves with force beyond a guilty hand,
Or of his manly limbs the vigour match'd
His fortitude of mind; his falchion clove 200
Down to the neck that faithless Greek, of Greece
The most malignant foe. The treacherous deed,
Which laid fair Thespia, with Platæan tow'rs
In dust, he thus aton'd. A bolt from heav'n
Thus rives an oak, whose top divided hangs 205
On either side obliquely from the trunk.
Murichides the Hellespontin bleeds,
Too zealous friend of Asia, in whose cause

This day he arm'd. By great Mardonius charg'd
 Late messenger of friendship, he in peace 210
 On Salaminian shores had touch'd the hand,
 Which now amid the tumult pierc'd his heart,
 Not willingly, if known. Then Lynceus fell,
 From Œdipeān Polyxenes sprung,
 The last remains of that ill-fated house. 215
 Mironides and Clinias near the side
 Of Aristides fought, his strong support.
 Yet undismay'd and firm three hundred chiefs,
 Or sons of proudest families in Thebes,
 Dispute the victory till death. Meantime 220
 Olympiodorus from the left had gall'd
 Thessalia's squadrons, like a sleety storm
 Checking their speed. Athenian horse, though few,
 Mix'd with their bowmen, well maintain'd their
 ground.
 His own true-levell'd shaft transfix'd the throat 225
 Of Larissean Thorax; who in dust
 Buries at length his Aleuadian pride.

Rememb'ring

Rememb'ring all his charge bold Cimon rears
 His mighty spear. Impetuous through a band
 Of yielding Phocians he on Theban ranks 230.

Falls like a rapid falcon, when his weight
 Precipitates to strike the helpless prey.

Him slaughter follows; slaughter from the right

On Æschylus attends, and mightier waits

On Aristides. Justice in his breast 235

Awhile was blind to mercy undeferv'd,

Ev'n unimplor'd, by persevering foes

Invet'rate. Now on this empurpled stage

Of vengeance due to perfidy and crimes,

Twice their own number had the Athenians heap'd

Of massacred Bœotians; but as heav'n, 241

Not to destruction punishing, restrains

Its anger just, and oft the harden'd spares,

That time may soften, or that suff'rings past,

Not measur'd full, may turn the dread of more 245

To reformation; Aristides thus

Relenting bade retreat be sounded loud,
 Then, by th' obedient host surrounded, spake
 Serene: Enough of Grecian blood is spilt,
 Ye men of Athens; low in dust are laid 250
 The heads of those who plann'd the fall of Greece,
 The populace obtuse, resembling you,
 Enlighten'd people, as the sluggish beast
 A gen'rous courser, let your pity save
 In gratitude to Jove, creating yours 255
 Unlike Bœotia's breed—Now form again.

Thus equity and mercy he combin'd,
 Like that archangel, authoris'd by heav'n
 Chief o'er celestial armies, when the fall'n
 From purity and faith in Eden's bow'r's 260
 Not to perdition nor despair he left
 Abandon'd. Aristides still proceeds:

New victories invite you; Sparta long
 Hath wanted succour; Men of Athens, march.

Lo!

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Lo! Menalippus greets in rapid haste 265
This more than hero. I am come, he said,
To bring thee tidings of Mardonius slain
In open fight. Pausanias still demands
Thy instant presence. In pursuit he reach'd
The stream. "Not now that passage is forbid," 270
Tisamenus exclaim'd. The gen'ral pass'd
In vain to force the well-defended camp;
Repuls'd in ev'ry part he dubious stands
With disappointment sore; on Attic skill
To mount entrenchments and a rampart strom
Laconians and Tegæans both depend 276
To crown the day. Th' Athenian heard, and cool
In four divisions separates the host.
Four thousand warriors, light and heavy-arm'd,
Each part compose; whose ensigns o'er the flood 280
In order just are carry'd. He attains
Th' adjacent field, and joins Pausanias there;
Whose ravell'd brow, and countenance of gloom

Present a lion's grimness, who, some fold,
Or stall attempting, thence by vollied stones 285
Of trooping shepherds, and of herdsmen, chas'd,
Hath sullenly retreated, though oppress'd
By famine dire. To Aristides spake
With haughtiness redoubled Sparta's chief:

Didst thou forget, Athenian, who commands 290
The Grecian armies? Thou hast loiter'd long
Since my two mandates. With majestic warmth
The righteous man: Pausanias, now receive
From Aristides language new, but just.
Thine is the pride of satraps, not the light 295
Ingenuous vanity of Greeks, from sense
Of freedom, sense of cultivated minds,
Above the rest of mortals. No; a black,
Barbaric humour festers at thy heart,
Portending usurpation. Know, proud man, 300
Thou hast been weigh'd, and long deficient found

By

By Aristides, thy superior far,
Then most superior, when for public good
Compliant most. Thou soon, O! Spartan born,
Yet in thy country's decency untaught, 305
Will like a Persian cast a loathing eye
On freedom, on Lycurgus and his laws,
Which gall a mind despotic. I preface
Thee dangerous, Pausanias. Where the seeds
Of dark ambition I suspect, my eye 310
Becomes a jealous sentinel; beware,
Nor force my active vigilance to proof
Now or in future, when united Greece,
No more defensive, may retaliate war,
Successful war, which prompts aspiring thoughts.
Rest now a safe spectator. From defeat 316
Of real warriors, of our fellow Greeks,
Not Persians lightly arm'd in loose array,
The loiterers of Athens shall with ease
Surmount that fence impregnable to thee. 320

To wait an answer he disdain'd, but march'd;
 While arrogance in secret gnash'd the teeth
 Of this dark-minded Spartan, doom'd to prove
 The boding words of Aristides true.

The sun, no longer vertical, began 325
 His slant Hesperian progres. At the head
 Of his own host Cecropia's chief began.
 Enthusiaistic flame, without whose aid
 The soldier, patriot, and the bard is faint,
 At this great crisis thus inspires the man 330
 Of human race the most correct in mind:

Ye shades of all, who tyrants have expell'd,
 Ye, who repose at Marathon entomb'd,
 Ye glorious victims, who exalt the name
 Of Salamis, and Manes of the brave 335
 Leonidas, arise! Our banners fan
 With your Elysian breath! Thou god supreme,

Jove

Book XXX. THE ATHENAI.D. 275

Jove elutherian, send thy child belov'd,
With her Gorgonian ægis, to defend
A people struggling not for spoil, or pow'r, 340
Not to extend dominion, but maintain.

The right of nature, thy peculiar gift
To dignify mankind. I lift this prayer,
My citizens, in rev'rence, not in doubt
Of your success. Ye vanquishers of Greeks, 345

Beneath your spears yon servile herd will fall,
As corn before the sickle. With a look
Of circumspection he remark'd a swell
Of ground not fifty paces from the camp;

Olympiodorus and his bowmen there 350
He posted first. Now, Æschylus, he said,
Construct of solid shields a brazen roof;
In contact close to yonder fence of wood
Form like the tortoise in his massy shell. 354

The archers, each like Phœbus skill'd, remove
With show'rs of death the thick defendants soon.

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Clear from the rampart, which in height surpass'd
Two cubits. Æschylus not slow performs
His task. A rank of sixty warriors plac'd
Erect, with cov'ring bucklers o'er their heads, 360
A brazen platform to the wall unites.
The next in order stoop behind; the last
Kneel firm on earth. O'er implicated shields
A stable passage thus when Cimon fees,
He mounts, and fearless eyes the Asian camp. 365
Between the rampart's basis and the foe
An empty space observing, on the ground
His spear he fixes, and amidst a storm
Of clatt'ring javelins, arrows, darts and stones,
Swings down. So, shooting from the sulph'rous lap
Of some dark-veited cloud, a globe of fire 371
Through winds and rain precipitates a blaze
Terrific down the raven pall of night.
His whole division follows; with his band
Myronides, and Æschylus, releas'd 375

From

Book XXX. THE ATHENAI'D. 277

From his first care. Successively they range.
The very fence, by Persian toil uprais'd,
Now from the Persian multitude secures
Th' Athenian near. No obstacle remains
To Aristides, who compleats his plan. 380
Olympiodorus and his active train
With axes keen, and cleaving spades approach ;
Hewn down, uptorn in that surmounted part,
The fall'n defences, and the levell'd ground, 384
Soon leave an op'ning wide. His strong reserve,
Eight thousand light, two thousand heavy-arm'd,
With Haliartus, and Oileus' son,
Cecropia's chief leads forward to sustain
His first bold warriors. Chileus enters next
With his Tegæans, Aemnestus brave, 390
Pausanias, Amompharetus, the youth
Of Menalippus, all the Spartan host.
Seven Grecian myriads through the breach invade
A ground, with swarms of tents and men oppres'd.

Dire

278 . THE ATHENAID. Book XXX.

Dire thus th' irruption of Germanic seas 395

Through strong Batavian mounds; th' inflated
brine

Stupendous piles of long-resisting weight
Bears down, and, baffling strength and art combin'd,
Foams o'er a country in its seat profound
Below the surface of th' endang'ring main; 400

A country, where frugality and toil
No spot leave waste, no meadow, but in herds
Redundant; where the num'rous dwellings shew
Simplicity but plenty, now immers'd
With all their throng'd inhabitants beneath 405

Th' unsparing deluge. Aristides swift,
As if by gen'ral choice the chief supreme,
Commandment issues, that to either side
The host extend, that, skirted by the fence,
With wheeling flanks in front the line assume 410
A crescent's figure. Thus the fisher skill'd
With his capacious seines, slow-dragg'd and pres'd

Close

Close on each bank, a river's whole expanse
With all his natives glossy-finn'd involves.

Yet Mindarus, with Mede and Persian ranks, 415
A large remainder from the morning fight,
Resists, which soon are slaughter'd; he retreats
Among the tents, whose multitude impedes
The Grecians. Aristides straight commands,
That from the heavy line's disjointed length 420
A hundred bands expatiate in the chace
Of foes benumb'd by fear, who neither fight,
Nor fly, of means depriv'd. The carnage grows
In every quarter. Fountains seem unclos'd,
Whence rivulets of blood o'erflow the ground. 425
O'er satraps, potentates, and princes fall'n,
Strode Aristides first of men, of heav'n
The imitator in his civil deeds,
Now some faint semblance, far as mortal may
Of that Almighty victor on the field 430
Ethereal,

Ethereal, when o'er helms, and helmed heads
 Of prostrate seraphim, and powers o'erthrown,
 He rode. Still Mindarus, by courage wing'd,
 From nation flies to nation, still persists
 Exhorting; though in hopeless thought he sees 435
 Great Hyperanthes from the shades ascend,
 And seems to hear the godlike phantom sigh
 In mournful words like these: Ah! fruitless toil!
 As once was mine, to rescue from despair
 The panic fears of Asia! Dead in mind, 440
 Her host already soon dead clay must lie,
 Like me on Oeta's rock. Yet Midias brave,
 With Tiridates rous'd, their efforts join.
 Against them warlike Medon, and the seed
 Of Lygdamis, chance brings. They side by side,
 As heretofore Thermopylæ beheld 446
 Young Dithyrambus and Diomedon,
 Had all the day their unresisted wedge
 Of Locrian shields and Delphian led to deeds,

Accumulating

Accumulating trophies. Midias falls 450
By Haliartus. From the slain his lance
Recov'ring, tow'rds his patron dear he turns ;
Him conqu'ror too of Tiridates views
In joy ; joy soon to sorrow chang'd ! Fate guides
A casual weapon from a distant hand ; 455
Such as at Ramoth from the Syrian bow,
Drawn at a venture, smote between the joints
Of harness strong the Israelitish king,
Who from the fight bade wheel his chariot, stain'd
With his own crimson. Ponderous and broad 460
The hostile lance inflicts a mortal wound
In Medon's gen'rous bosom. Not a sigh
He breathes, in look still placid and sedate,
While death's cold moisture stagnates on his limbs,
By all their pow'rs forsaken. Bear, he said 465
To Haliartus, bear me from the camp,
Nor yet extract the weapon; life, I feel,
Would follow swift, and Medon hath a charge

Yet

Yet to deliver. Some pathetic Muse,
 In tend'rest measures give these numbers flow! 470
 Let thine, who plaintive on the pontic verge
 In servitude Sarmatian, through her page
 Of sorrows weeps thy banishment from Rome;
 Or thine, Euripides, whose moral strains
 Melt sympathy in tears at human woes, 475
 Thy vary'd tragic themes, or both unite
 Your inspiration to describe a heart,
 Where gratitude o'er all affections dear
 Predominantly sway'd; the faithful heart
 Of Haliartus at this sudden stroke 480
 Of direful chance. To death is Medon snatch'd,
 From glory snatch'd amid victorious friends.
 The Carian's bosom instant feels combin'd
 Achilles' anguish at Patroclus dead,
 The pang of Priam at the fall of Troy, 485
 Ev'n woman's grief, Andromache's distress
 For her slain Hector, and his mother's pain

To

To see his mangled and dishonour'd corse.

Great Artemisia's name, th' illustrious blood
From Lygdamis deriv'd, his own exploits 490

Of recent fame, are all eras'd from thought

In Haliartus now; who sinks again

To Melibœus. On the wounded chief,

As on his lord, his patron, still he looks

With all th' affection of a menial, bred 495

In the same home, and cherish'd in that home

With lib'ral kindness to his humbler state.

He clasps the fainting hero, on the shields

Of weeping friends deposits, and conveys

Swift through a portal, from its hinges forc'd. 500

Three hours remain'd to Phœbus in his course.

Close by the entrenchment, under beachen shade

Of ancient growth, a fountain bursts in rills

Transparent; thither on the down of moss

Was Medon borne and laid. Unloose, he said, 505

My

My helm, and fill from that refreshing stream.

Obey'd, he drank a part ; then pouring down
The remnant, spake : By this libation clear
Be testified my thanks to all the gods,

That I have liv'd to see my country sav'd

On this victorious day. My fate requires

No lamentation, Haliartus dear,

Oh ! more, than kindred, dear. Commend me first
To Aristides ; Medon's parting breath

Him victor hails. To Delphi's virtuous priest,

To my Leonteus, to the glorious son

Of Neocles, my salutation bear,

To kind Cleander, my Trœzenian host,

To Hyacinthus of Eubœa's race,

The flower of all her chieftains : They have prov'd

In me some zeal their island to redeem.

Transport my ashes to Melissa's care,

Them near the reliques of Laconia's king

Repose ; be mine the neighbour of his urn.

Here

Book XXX. THE ATHENAID. 285

Here with an utmost effort of his voice, 525
With arms extended, and Elysian look :

Leonidas, the life thy friendship sav'd,
An off'ring to thy manes, now I close
Mature in age, to glory not unknown,
Above the wish, as destitute of hope 530
To find a fairer time, or better cause,
Than sends me now a messenger to greet
Thee with glad tidings of this land preserv'd.

With his own hand the javelin from his breast
He draws serene ; life issues through the wound.

New shouts, new trumpets, waken from a trance
Of grief the son of Lygdamis. He sees
Cleander ; who th' Asopian banks had pass'd,]
Call'd by Sicinus from Saturnia's dome.
Lo ! Epidaurian Clitophon, the ranks 540
Of

Of Phlius with Menander, Sicyon's chief

Automedon, the Hermionean spears

With Lycus follow, Cephallene's sons,

The Acarnanian, all th' Epirot bands,

Leprean Conon, with Mycenæ's youth

545

Polydamas, by Arimnestus led

The brave Platæans, with his Thespian files

Alcimedon, Nearcus with his force

Of Chalcis, Potidæan Tydeus next,

Eretrian Cleon, Lampon, and the troop

550

Of little Styra, Corinth's banners last,

By Adimantus and Alcmæon rang'd.

Too late you come for glory, them bespeak

The Carian sad: Lo! half the foes destroy'd

By Aristides, fugitives the rest;

555

Lo! there the only loss, which Greece sustains.

To him Cleander, with devout regret

O'er Medon, honour'd paranymph and guest,

His head inclining: Not too late we come
For sacrifice of Persians to the ghost 560
Of this dead hero. Ah! what floods of tears
Will fall in Træzen—But let grief prevail
Hereafter. Son of Lygdamis, renounce
Despondency; Acanthè still survives
To fire thy breast as Ariphilia mine; 565
I hear her prompting my vindictive arm.
From thy experience of this glorious day
Lead thy Træzenian host, where best to point
His strenuous efforts. Let thy guiding zeal
For me, long cursing my inactive post, 570
Yet find one track to fame. These gallant words
Of cordial frankness from dejection lift
The Carian brave, not less than Phœbus cheer'd
The languid son of Priam on the bank
Of Xanthus; when a stony mass, of weight 575
To stay a keel on Hellespontine sands,
By Ajax hurl'd, benumb'd the Trojan's frame.

Thus

Thus Haliartus : Through that open gate,
 New forc'd, the shortest, safest passage lies ;
 But, to acquire some lustre, I can shew 580
 Another track for prowels yet to shine.

He leads, all follow, save Corinthian bands
 With Adimantus, hast'ning through the gate,
 Soon as to him th' intelligence is brought ;
 Who ent'ring, sees a carnage which confounds 585
 A timid spirit. By Alcmæon urg'd,
 Close by the fence he marches ; none he meets
 But fly before him. Adimantus lifts
 His spear, and satiates cowardice with blood
 Of unresisting men. By cheap success 590
 Betray'd, a distant quarter he attains,
 Where Mindarus confronts him. From his steed
 Th' unyielding satrap whirls a rapid lance,
 Which nails the base Corinthian to the ground.
 Alcmæon next is wounded ; more had bled, 595
 But

But Aristides o'er that part, devoid
Of tents, his dreadful crescent in array
Is forming new. The Persian starts; he flies
To one last angle of the spacious camp,
Sole spot unforc'd. Half circled now in front, 600
The Attic, Spartan, and Tegæan ranks,
In motion slow, yet moving on, augment
Progressively their terrors, like a range
Of clouds, which thicken on the brow of night,
A final wreck portending to a fleet, 605
Already shatter'd by the morning storm.
Round Mindarus the remnant of his host
Collected still is numerous. Them he sees
Oft look behind, a sight that ill accords
With warriors; but, as now in columns deep 610
Its glitt'ring horns that direful crescent shews
Within the limits of a javelin's cast,
All turn intent on flight at large; they break

290 THE ATHENAID. Book XXX.

Their own inclosure down, whose late defence
Is present bane, and intercepts escape. 615

Lo! Haliartus; all whose grief is chang'd
To fire, heroic flame. - Three myriads fresh
He pours; that crowded angle he invests,
Preventing flight. Cleander looks around
Like some tornado menacing a bark, 620
Which soon unseam'd and parted sinks ingulph'd;
He finds a breach and with him enters death.

The long-enduring satrap, whose mild soul
Calamity hath worn, resembles now
The poor desponding sailor, who is left
Last of the found'ring vessel on a plank
Alone. No coast appears; the greedy swell
He sees around, expecting ev'ry wave
Will terminate his being, and forgoes
All hope of succour. His afflicted soul
Thus with an effort equal to his rank 630

Book XXX. THE ATHENAID. 291

The prince explores: What, Mindarus, remains
For thee deserted! In another's home
Cleora dwells, Mardonius is no more;
Slain is Mardonius, Asia's glory fall'n; 635
Thou hast too long been fugitive this day;
Like Teribazus close a term of woe;
Like him in death be honour'd. He dismounts,
He grasps a spear. Such dignity of shame
To Ilian Hector, from his flight recall'd, 640
Great Homer's Muse imparted. While the prince
Is meditating thus, a man sublime
Tow'rs from th' Athenians, who suspend their
march;
Unlike the son of Peleus in his ire
Implacable, he represents a god 645
In aspect, god of mercy, not of arms.

Know, chieftain, he began, to me the Greeks
One Persian life have granted; it is thine.

O 2

In

In this day's trial I have noted well

Thy constancy and manhood; I, who prize 650
The gems of virtue, in whatever ~~count~~,

O Persian! whether in a friend or foe

Their never-changing lustre they display;

I, Aristides, my protecting arm

Extend. Time presses; yield thee, ere too late;

Captivity no burden shalt thou find,

656.

Till safe, without a ransom, thou regain

Thy native feat. The Persian melts like snow

In all its rigour at the noon-tide sun.

This unforeseen, humane demeanour calms 660

His mind, and hushes ev'ry desp'rate thought.

He thus replies: On all my actions past

Hath fortune frown'd; perhaps a captive state

With Aristides, whom Masius lov'd,

Mardonius prais'd, and all mankind reveres, 665

Forebodes a change of fortune to my gain!

Thy

Thy condescending wisdom, O supreme
In justice, knowledge, and benignant deeds,
May lift a man of sorrows from despair !

He yields. Th' Athenian leads him through the
pref 670

Secure ; himself a spectacle avoids,
Which others covet. Lo ! on ev'ry fide
Keen swords of massacre are wav'd. To maids
Deflow'r'd, dishonour'd wives, and gods prophan'd,
To Athens, Thespia, and Platæa burnt, 675
The Greeks compleat their sacrifice. The sun,
Wont on those fields of glist'ning green to smile,
And trace Asopus through his crystal maze,
Now setting, glances over lakes of blood ;
While fate with Persian carnage chafes the stream
No longer smooth and limpid, but o'erwoln, 681
And foaming purple, with encreasing heaps

Of

294 THE ATHENAID. Book XXX.

Of carcases and arms. Night drops her shade
On thirty myriads slaughter'd. Thus thy death,
Leonidas of Sparta, was aveng'd, 685
Greece thus by Attic virtue was preserv'd.



F I N I S.

E R R A T A.

- B. XXIII. l. 49, *for Cephallenia, read Cephalenia.*
- B. XXVII. l. 167, *dele a.*
- B. XXVII. l. 310, *for potentous, read portentous.*
- B. XXVIII. l. 80, *dele the comma after consign'd.*
- B. XXIX. l. 13, *dele the comma after waits.*
- B. XXIX. l. 335, *dele the comma after Lacedæmon's.*
- B. XXIX. l. 512, *dele and.*
- B. XXX. l. 46, *for involuntary, read involuntary.*
- B. XXX. l. 91, *for wise, read good.*
- B. XXX. l. 112, *for like, read as.*



